

POETICAL WORKS  
OF  
SYDNEY DOBELL.

VOL. I.





THE  
POETICAL WORKS  
OF  
SYDNEY DOBELL.

'The flashes of the fire  
Are fire, that which was soul is spirit still,  
And shall not die.'

*WITH INTRODUCTORY NOTICE AND MEMOIR*

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## IN MEMORIAM.

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THE POET whose work is for the first time, in a proximately complete form, brought before the public, has been removed from us under circumstances which devolve on those who were privileged with his companionship the duty of endeavouring to supplement the somewhat fragmentary impressions of his career. Mr. Sydney Dobell died on August 22, in his fifty-first year; his literary fame was achieved before his thirtieth; his literary labours may be said to have well nigh closed with his thirty-fifth. Two longer poems and a volume of minor pieces, making the greater bulk of what he has left behind him, are the product of comparative youth, but bear the stamp of an original and singularly subtle mind, and exhibit sufficient power to continue to affect the thoughts and sympathies of his contemporaries. Passing in his prime, he has yet lived through fifteen years of enforced silence—his brilliant promise having been cruelly curtailed by physical disaster—into a new atmosphere of the rapidly shifting cloud-strata of nineteenth century criticism. ‘*Proterit dies diem.*’ Every decade has its standards, idols, aversions and neglects. The Preraphaelite has succeeded

to the so-called Spasmodic, as the Spasmodic flashed for a season across the Tennysonian, as the Tennysonian superseded the Byronic school. This is not the place to attempt to estimate the import of these changes in the history of Art ; but they testify to the shortness of our memories. Our wish is to be permitted briefly to direct attention to some of the attributes of a character which, more steadfast than fashions, stronger than suffering, and superior to the frustration of unselfish ambitions, has left to all within the range of its influence a noble example of an English life.

Sydney Dobell was born on April 5, 1824, at Cranbrook, in Kent, the eldest son of the descendant of an old Sussex family distinguished on the Cavalier side when Charles was king. From both sides of his ancestry he inherited literary and speculative tastes, manifested during his early years, spent at Peckham Rye, near London, by the composition of some precocious juvenile verses. His mother was a daughter of Samuel Thompson, a well-known political reformer in the early part of the century, and advocate of a new union of Christians on a comprehensive basis. His father was John Dobell, author of a pamphlet on Government, who subsequently settled as a wine merchant at Cheltenham. In his twelfth year the family removed to Gloucestershire, and the poet maintained with various degrees of activity till his death his connection with the calling and the district. In practical illustration of a theory like that carried out with results in some respects similar by the elder Mill, he was, with four other sons and five daughters, educated by private

tutors, and by his own study, pursued with a zeal already excessive, entirely at home, and was never sent to school or University. To this fact he makes an interesting reference in the course of some frequently humorous verses on Cheltenham College, which date from his eighteenth year. They profess to have been discovered in an ancient manuscript, and copy, with imperfect success, the spelling of Chaucer, but they evince the passion for nature which is one of the most easily appreciable charms of his maturest work :

‘ Little in human schules have I beene ;  
 My colledge is all carpeted with greene,  
 And archèd with a roof of spangled blue,  
 My Hippocrene is the early dewe,  
 My seate turf-piled is dight with faery sheene,  
 My table some old stone no handes did hewe,  
 Or twisted roote of oake or classicke beech.  
 My servitor, the sweetly spoken breeze,  
 Strange unwritte books doth bringe me one by one.  
 Well pleased I make and take my own degree,  
 Master of many arts no schule can teach ;  
 My colledge hath no termes. Its doctors are  
 Righte eloquent sweet flow’res and whisperinge trees,  
 Whereof the winde takes counselle ; everie star  
 That discourseth all nighte with silent speeche ;  
 Greye reverende hilles with foreheads bare with age,  
 Great stormes that argue sternlie each with each  
 When woods chant anthems, and a streame or two  
 For work-day musicke.’

Home education undoubtedly fosters the precocious forms of genius ; but in absence of social checks it too often permits originality to degenerate into eccentricity. To the circumstances of the poet’s early training may be traced many peculiarities of a mind never sufficiently

influenced by the contact and friction of its equals. Innate benevolence of nature (*εὐφροία*) prevented this isolation in Mr. Dobell's case from manifesting itself as a moral, but it remained an intellectual defect. He lived more for those around him than *for himself*, but he lived mentally to a great extent *by himself*; for though he gave much he received little, and found it hard to descend from the heights among which, even in boyhood, in solitary night-watches, he loved to lose himself, to the beaten paths of meaner life. He had all the reverence for superior wisdom which belongs to wisdom, but to ordinary criticism he remained singularly unamenable.

In 1844 he married Emily, daughter of George Fordham, of Odsey House, Cambridgeshire—whose family is one of the oldest in that county—a lady to whom in his sixteenth year he had been engaged; for thirty years his constant companion in ‘the quiet woodland ways.’ The early years of their wedded life were divided between residence at Cheltenham, where Sydney continued to superintend his father's business, and some pleasant country places among the hills, the chief of which were Hucclecote on the Via Arminia and Coxhorne House, their home for five summers in the valley of Charlton Kings. This period, as that which preceded it, was marked by the composition of many minor pieces, in some of which he appeared as a zealous politician and ardent reformer, and by the progress of his first considerable work.

The charm of Mr. Dobell's manner had in his youth at Cheltenham attracted the attention of the most culti-

vated men in the neighbourhood and some distinguished strangers; among these Thomas Campbell visited him and admired his powers of conversation. A meeting with Mr. Stansfeld and Mr. George Dawson at Coxhorne is said to have originated the society of the 'Friends of Italy.' The poet's enthusiasm for the Italian cause, with the various fluctuations of which he continued to be intimately acquainted, never abated; it remained—as evinced by one of his latest fragments entitled 'Mentana'—amid many changes of opinion, a link between his earlier and later politics. The outcome of this sentiment, his first published poem 'The Roman,' written among the Cotswolds, and inspired by the stirring events which have since proved prophetic of the liberation of the Peninsula, appeared in 1850. Its success was rapid and unmistakable. The theme and its treatment, in happy accord with a prevalent vein of popular feeling—in no less degree the intrinsic merit of the work, the flow of the lyrics, the strong sweep of the graver verse, the richness and beauty of the imagery—attracted universal attention, and enlisted the favour alike of the general public and of the most discerning critics. At this distance of time we may be permitted to reproduce a few sentences from the welcome given to 'The Roman' by the *Athenæum*—from the pen, it is believed, of a highly accomplished and successful author, to whom the identity of the young poet, veiled under the assumed name of Sydney Yendys, was then unknown. After adverting to the opposite and equally fatal defects of the merely florid and the bald style of verse, to one or other of which most minor poets

are liable, the reviewer proceeds : ' Any work, therefore, which indicates a return to the completeness of poetic art must have welcome at our hands, and we know of none for years that so thoroughly fulfils the condition as this dramatic poem.

It possesses unity of purpose and of conduct. In dealing with emotions the writer touches with equal power the pathetic and the sublime, and to the illustration of these feelings he brings a fancy which can rivet by its boldness and enchain by its beauty. Never shrinking from a conception on account of its daring, he generally seeks to present it in the most lucid form. To a large extent he fulfils both the requirements of the poet : he comprehends his inspiration and renders it comprehensible to others. Throughout his whole volume we can recall but few offences against perspicuity and good taste—the chief faults being an occasional diffusiveness and verbal iteration, and some abruptness in the development of a love-interest at the beginning. It is less a fault than an immaturity that the author's images are sometimes so lavished as rather to display the opulence of his store than to turn it to account.' Then after an outline of the plot and a selection of passages, in which the description of the hero-monk, the exquisite lyric—

'Oh, Lila ! round our early love,'

the impassioned appeal to the children, and the account of the brother's death figure conspicuously, the critic adds : ' Should anyone, after the preceding extracts, doubt whether we have a new poet amongst us, we should

almost despair of his conversion.' He goes on, however, to adduce Mr. Dobell's 'Coliseum,' the classic grandeur of which justifies the apparent audacity of encountering the comparison which it suggests. He concludes: 'The poet's defects are those of youth, and it might excuse far graver ones. His merits, combining art with impulse and imagination, are such as youth rarely attains, but which are the true pledges of high and lasting excellence.' This critique, as just as cordial, struck the key-note of a general acclaim, in the echo of which the book was read and admired on both sides of the Atlantic. It had abundance of minor merits, but its presiding charm lay in its novelty and earnestness of noble aim. 'The Roman' was hailed as the product of a man of refined culture, whose sympathies went beyond the mere love of 'harmony in tones and numbers hit' to the wider movements of his age. In spite of some traces of haste and the excessive preponderance of monologue in the drama, it is marked by a cosmopolitan grasp evidencing catholic interests beyond the 'streak of silver sea,' often wanting in the masterpieces of more consummate artists.

About this time, when the gates of the temple or the mart of literature seemed to open wide to the rising author, he made a hurried visit to London, and was frequently urged by editors and others to write for various periodicals; but circumstances interfered with his availing himself to any considerable extent of their invitations. In the summer of 1851 he made, with Mrs. Dobell, a short tour in Switzerland, which left its natural impress on his subsequent work. On his return to England,



during a longer residence in the capital, he gathered round him a circle of literary admirers, and, either by personal intercourse or correspondence, at this or subsequent periods, made the acquaintance of most of the eminent writers of the day, among whom may be mentioned Robert Browning, Coventry Patmore, and Philip Bailey, George Macdonald, Mr. Thomas Hughes, Mr. Deutsch of the Talmud, Mr. Monckton Milnes, now Lord Houghton, and Mr. Westland Marston, with the last of whom he remained through life on terms of cordial friendship. Acknowledgment should also be made to the generous appreciation of his genius effectively expressed by a discerning though sometimes erratic critic, the Rev. George Gilfillan. The poet's appreciation of art, of which he was a fine critic, brought him into pleasant relationship with Mr. Ruskin, Holman Hunt, and Gabriel Rossetti ; his zeal for continental liberty was a passport to the affection of Joseph Mazzini ; at a later date he met and thoroughly appreciated the greatest orator of our century, Louis Kossuth. Introduced to Mr. Tennyson at Cheltenham, and to Mr. Thomas Carlyle in London, he was brought into closer contact with those leaders of our literature during their common stay at Malvern. They had many walks and talks together, and maintained a considerable degree of intimacy. He had afterwards opportunities of meeting Mr. Tennyson in the Isle of Wight, and it may be conjectured that Mr. Carlyle's influence played its part in weaning Mr. Dobell from the more or less democratic views which marked the early stages of his intellectual career. Among his letters we may refer to those inter-

changed with Charlotte Brontë as of acknowledged literary interest on both sides. Meanwhile he published his second considerable poem, 'Balder,' begun at Coxhorne, continued among the Alps, and finished in 1853 at Amberley Hill. This remarkable work, destined to be the first part of a trilogy of the artistic life, is the embodiment of the author's deepest thought and highest poetry. No more exquisite descriptions of external nature in her various phases of glory and of gloom, are to be found in our language than those scattered over its finest pages. The profound psychological analysis which underlies the exuberance of a somewhat recluse imagination, bears witness to the comparative maturity of a powerful mind battling with the problems of a complex age. 'Balder' was, with the general public and the majority of critics, less fortunate than its predecessor; nor, while demurring to their judgment, can we altogether wonder at the contrast. In the first place, it is harder to read, as it must have been much harder to write, than 'The Roman,' and the majority of readers are intolerant of poetry that taxes their wits. The plot is painful and the thought somewhat monotonous—for it harps, though with marvellous subtilty, on a few strings—and we are wont to demand from verse above all things pleasure and variety. Its faults of detail are more numerous than in 'The Roman.' Side by side with passages of Shakespearean grasp we have outrages against taste and sense. The admissibility of such exhibitions of horror and disgust as the picture of Tyranny is at least questionable, though the example

of Dante may be pleaded in their behalf. In the second place, the moral purpose of the whole work has been so utterly mistaken that 'Balder' has, even by friendly critics, been supposed to be the author's ideal character, and even preposterously confounded with a character between which and it there was not one common feature—his own. The repulsive egotism of the hero was probably recognised by no one so much as by Mr. Dobell—himself perhaps the most unselfish literary man of our century—and the object of the whole was to show, in another fashion than that of Lear or Faust, how even such an incarnation of arrogance and pride might be wrenched by trial and suffering 'μαθήματα παθήματα' to a higher life. Even the dénouement of the fragment before us was misunderstood; for Amy, saved from death at the last moment, was to play an important part in the subsequent evolution of the drama. But the plan of the book is unfortunate. It is pitched on too great a scale, and demanded more than the energy of one life for its accomplishment.

Every part of a consummate work of art ought, like the hand or foot of a finished organism, to bear evidence of its purpose. Did the 'Inferno' stand by itself, it would still have a terrible unity. The same holds good of every section of any of the great ancient trilogies, as it does in our own day of Mr. Swinburne's 'Bothwell.' Mr. Dobell's tragedy, on the other hand, is not only incomplete, but confusingly chaotic; the richness of its imagery is like cloth of gold flung over the limbs created by a Frankenstein. But while any criticaster can sneer at those lapses

where the poet manifestly crosses the boundary line between the sublime and the ridiculous, it may be doubted if any living English poet has scaled the same heights. There is not a chapter which does not bear witness to the author's indefinite power and almost measureless capacity for noble passion. Its dioramas of scenery are drawn by the eye and pencil of one who from a watch-tower on the hills outgazed the stars, and paid homage to a hundred dawns, and

‘hung his room with thought  
Morning and noon and eve and night, and all  
The changing seasons.’

His Chamouni rivals that of Coleridge, as his Coliseum rivals that of Byron. His descriptions of Spring have the luxuriance and the truth of Shelley's. The pastoral loveliness of the long summer's day on the hills (Scene XXIV.) recalls the idyll in the Bohemia of the ‘Winter's Tale.’ The music of Amy's songs ripples alongside of the terror and tumult of the tragedy with ‘a dying fall like the sweet south.’ ‘Genius,’ said one of its few appreciative critics, the writer of a review in ‘Fraser's Magazine,’ ‘is so unmistakably present in every page of the strange book before us, that to give examples from one without injustice to the others we find to be beyond possibility in our limits.’ ‘Balder’ is not likely to become popular in our generation ; to most readers it will remain a portent ; but, in spite of flagrant defects, it has stamina for permanence, and will keep its place in our literature as a mine for poets.

In 1854 Mr. Dobell left Coxhorne and took up his resi-

dence in Edinburgh, having gone there to seek medical advice for his wife, whose health had for some time back caused him great anxiety. In the course of the three subsequent years, the winters of which were spent mainly in Edinburgh, the summers in various parts of the Scotch Highlands, he became associated with another group of literary men, with some of whom he maintained a lifelong friendship. Twenty years ago, though the noon-tide glory of the Northern Athens had waned, a pleasant twilight of culture lingered about her halls and hills. Original force and talent, apart from that which is strictly professional or physical, had not been driven south of the Tweed by 'the Franciscan and Dominican licensers.' Mr. Dobell was soon brought into contact with the brightest and best spirits within his new radius. Foremost among these were Mr. John Hunter, the Mæcenas of Craigcrook, whose genial hospitality resembled that of the poet in delicacy and open-handedness; the lamented Dr. Samuel Brown—our modern Paracelsus, with the keen eye of genius for all its kindred; Dr. John Brown, 'der Einzige,' our prose poet, who happily remains 'the loved of all,' transmitting to ours the spirit of a more magnanimous age; the veteran Dr. George Combe; Hugh Miller, of the Rocks, his strong mind yet undistracted by the clash of irreconcilables; the industrious and intelligent Chambersees; Dr. and Mrs. Hanna; Miss Catherine Sinclair, Mrs. Steuart Menteath, the gifted authoress of 'Lays of the Kirk and Covenant;' Mrs. Stirling, sister of Mr. Hunter, and authoress of 'Fanny Hervey;' the artists, Sir Noel Paton and James Archer;

among Professors, Dr. afterwards Sir James Simpson ; Edward Forbes, equally subtle in literature and science ; Piazzi Smyth, the Astronomer Royal ; the poet Aytoun, a man whom this generation regretfully recalls as one who, himself excelling, had a claim to teach ; and the indomitable Blackie with his accomplished wife : with all of these Mr. and Mrs. Dobell maintained, throughout the term of their stay, and with many of them till the close of his life, a more or less intimate intercourse. On occasion of a visit to St. Andrews they were cordially welcomed by the venerable Sir David Brewster, and made the acquaintance of Professor Ferrier. Of eminent or learned men who, belonging to other centres, were introduced to Mr. Dobell in Edinburgh, we may mention Professor Craik of Belfast, Sir William Thomson and the late Professor Nichol of Glasgow, Mr. Spencer Baynes—now Professor Baynes of St. Andrews—Canon Kingsley, Mr. Dallas, the redoubtable critic of the ‘Times,’ and Mr. Alfred Vaughan, the accomplished author of ‘Hours with the Mystics.’

During almost the whole of this period the Poet was united by ties of social intercourse and literary brotherhood with the late Mr. Alexander Smith, a man of imperfect culture, but endowed with a rich native genius, whom it has been a late fashion to depreciate as unduly as it was, during the meteor blaze of his ‘Life Drama,’ to over-exalt. With this friend he issued in 1855 a series of stirring sonnets on our Crimean struggle ; this was followed by a volume inspired by the same theme, ‘England in Time of War,’ in which the lyrical genius, patriotic

zeal, and 'fair humanities' of the author are variously and amply displayed. The success of this work was intermediate between that of 'the Roman' and 'Balder.' The theme was well chosen, and the incisive force of some of the chants, expressive of the hopes and fears that then thrilled through the heart of England, commanded general sympathy and appreciation. Among the most deservedly admired of these are 'The Mother's Lesson,' 'Tommy's Dead,' 'The Little Girl's Song,' 'Home Wounded,' 'An Evening Dream,' 'An Aspiration of the Spirit,' and 'Grass from the Battle-field.'

Mr. Dobell was always a patriotic politician, but there is little of politics, in a narrow sense, in these volumes : the author dismisses diplomacy in an angry sonnet, and prefers to bring before us the joys and woes of poor soldiers and their wives, to discussing the debates of courts and cabinets. In other pieces, his rich picturesque power and delicate sense of melody find full scope. The opening lines of 'A Shower in War-Time' are remarkable for their music, 'Lady Constance' for its rich dramatic variety, 'The Prayer of the Understanding' for its subtle under-currents of religious thought ; 'He Loves and he Rides Away,' combines these qualities, and is, with 'Keith of Ravelston,' a genuine ballad, deservedly a universal favourite. There is room for difference of opinion with regard to the success with which the author has made use of the Scotch dialect, and no room for doubt as to his excessive employment of verbal repetition in such pieces as 'Wind,' 'Farewell,' 'The Recruit's Ball,' and others. In the last-named, as elsewhere, it is manifest that the

Author's forte did not lie in the direction of humorous writing ; but the volumes, as a whole, marked by depth of sympathy and vigour of style, are not unworthy his fame.

Mr. Dobell's residence in Edinburgh was distinguished by many of those acts of disinterested kindness towards struggling men of letters which do not always meet with a return of gratitude. During these years more than one of our so-called minor poets was the frequent recipient of bounties remarkable alike for the delicacy of the manner in which they were offered and the comparatively slender resources from which they were drawn. Mr. Dobell's benevolence in proportion to his means was throughout more than munificent. His practice was in accordance with his theory expressed in 'Balder'—

'Charitable they  
Who, be their having more or less, so have  
That less is more than need, and more is less  
Than the great heart's goodwill.'

Simple to the verge of austerity in his own life, charity was his one extravagance. His favourite answer to any remonstrance on giving or paying 'too much' was a quotation from Tennyson's 'Enid'

'You will be all the wealthier, cried the Prince.'

This benevolence was, as may be supposed, frequently abused, but neither extortion nor ingratitude availed to sour the disposition of the giver. His kindness did not confine itself to pecuniary aid : in the case of all rising aspirants to literary fame, a class the most difficult to deal with, his advice and encouragement were as ready as his substantial aid. Among the worthiest of those who were



deeply indebted to this poet's criticism and counsel we may mention the short-lived and precocious David Gray of Merklands. One of Mr. Dobell's happiest acts of benevolence was the generous zeal which resulted in the early sheets of 'The Luggie' being placed in the author's hands shortly before his death. About a year before his own death, he left his room, to which he was confined during the greater part of the day, to revise the manuscript of a literary friend whose obligations to his suggestions are indefinite.

Towards the close of the poet's residence in Edinburgh his health began to give way, his originally strong constitution having been impaired by hard work and anxiety. His chest had suffered by the delivery to the members of the Philosophical Institution of a lecture, remarkable for its comprehensive view of the subject, on the Nature of Poetry. Advised to seek a milder climate, he spent the winters of the four following years at Niton in the Isle of Wight. The house he there occupied was so exposed to the waves that it has since been removed, and the situation may have suggested some of the most striking of the sonnets and other occasional pieces which at this time were his sole contributions to literature. His summer residence was at Cleeve Tower and other 'coignes of vantage' in the Cotswolds. The following notes, condensed from the reminiscences of an intimate and appreciative friend, which we have permission to insert, find here their proper place :—

'At this time, 1858, regular literary work being forbidden by his physicians, Mr. Dobell, with characteristic

energy, turned his thoughts into another channel of usefulness ; he planned and superintended the organisation of a new and ultimately extensive branch of the business in which, for so many years of his youth, he had actively taken part. In conducting this he was one of the first, if not the first in England, to introduce and apply the system of Co-operation which has since been widely extended. He held that every mercantile firm should be a kind of Commonwealth, in which the advancement of one ensures the advancement of all, and his efforts were always directed towards the realisation of this idea. He wished, moreover, to prove that a poet might be a thoroughly capable "man of affairs," and that the poetic or ideal faculty, rightly cultivated and employed, should assist instead of impeding practical life. It was one of the articles of his creed not merely that a good man of business might be a gentleman, but that in order to be the one in any thorough sense of the word, he *must* be the other. These views, maintained at a time when most people considered them to be visionary, are among the many instances in which the "dreams" of one man in advance of the rest prove the truisms of a later generation. Hence it happened that these years, during which he was withheld from any continuous imaginative or philosophical writing, were fruitful of good work in other ways. All who knew Gloucester were alive to the fact that Sydney Dobell was, in every sense of the word, a good citizen ; his name was identified with every movement in the direction of social, literary, or artistic progress, and with every charitable enterprise in the town

‘ Increasing delicacy of health rendered it necessary for Mr. Dobell, after the summer of 1862, to spend the winters abroad ; in that of ’62-’63 his head-quarters were at or near Cannes ; in ’63-’64 in Spain ; in ’64-’65, ’65-’66, in Italy ; the summers of those years were still spent in Gloucestershire. During these journeys, in all of which he was accompanied by his wife, the Poet was constantly gathering fresh historic and imaginative material. His letters of this period show the vivid and warm interest with which he studied the characteristic life, the social and political aspects, of every country with which he became familiar. He acquired new languages rapidly ; he spoke and wrote French and Italian with singular facility ; after five months’ residence in Spain he could converse easily in the native tongue, to which he had hitherto been a stranger. It is scarcely necessary to say how well the author of “ The Roman ” loved Italy, and he must have exulted in seeing, as achieved facts, the Freedom and Unity of which, in the enthusiasm of youth, he had sung ; it is equally needless to say how much he was welcomed by the Italian patriots. The pleasure of his continental sojourns was enhanced by his devotion to music and the fact that he was a student and fine critic of pictorial art. He had a profound admiration for Spain, its noble scenery, its language, certain innate qualities of its people, and he always expressed the strongest faith in a future revival of her ancient glories. But his closest ties were still to his own country, which he loved with an almost excessive patriotism. Though debarred from more massive work, he evinced,

by numerous contributions in prose and verse to current literature, his ardent interest in all relating to her welfare. In 1865 he contributed to the discussion concerning Parliamentary Reform a pamphlet written in the spirit of the liberal conservatism to which he latterly adhered. In this striking brochure, the masculine vigour of which commands the admiration even of those who disagree with its conclusions, he advocates a system of graduated Suffrage and Plurality of Votes in proportion to the status and responsibilities of each voter, a view to which the majority of our great thinkers have inclined.<sup>1</sup>

‘During one of his visits to Italy, in the course of a day’s excursion to the ruins of Pozzuoli, near Naples, he met with an accident which had serious results. While trying to realise the scene that St. Paul must have looked on when he landed there, Mr. Dobell stepped on a spot where only a thin crust of earth covered an opening into one of the great ancient underground works, through which he fell to a depth of ten or twelve feet. Though nearly stunned by a blow on the back of the neck, he seemed to recover almost immediately, and all injurious effects appeared to subside; but from that time dates the occasional recurrence of distressing symptoms which culminated in the summer of 1866, while he was again stay-

<sup>1</sup> ‘It is hard in all causes, but especially in matters of Religion, when voices shall be *numbered* and not *weighed*.’—LORD BACON.

‘There being in *number* little virtue, but by *weight* and measure wisdom working all things.’—MILTON.

This is a point on which MILL and CARLYLE meet: perhaps the only one.

ing at Edinburgh, in a definite seizure of epileptiform disease. From the consequences of this severe and prolonged attack, his naturally sound constitution and the simple English country life to which he returned, enabled him to rally. His physicians especially urged "plenty of fresh air," and to Mr. Dobell, who always delighted in manly sports and keenly enjoyed pursuing the natural sciences in the sun and breeze, this prescription was eminently acceptable. As soon as his strength permitted he took exercise, chiefly on horseback, and by degrees it became habitual to him to be out of doors for many hours of the day. 'Rest from all brain-work' was the other condition insisted on, but this was impossible; the power and sensitiveness which mark the highest order of minds can never have perfect rest in human life. To live without breathing would have been as easy to Sydney Dobell as to live without thinking strenuously.

'During this time, with occasional visits to Clifton in the colder season, during which he benefited by the kind care of the late accomplished Dr. Symonds, formed the acquaintance of the Miss Winkworths and contracted a friendship with Dr. Percival of the College, the poet lived at Noke Place—a small house, beautifully situated on the slope of Chosen Hill, near Gloucester. Here, through the ensuing three years, he enjoyed some intervals of comparative health and strength, too brief to enable him to attempt any continuous literary work. But among his papers belonging to this time, there are many eloquent letters to the current journals on various questions of the day, besides the pamphlet, "Consequential

Damages," suggested by the American difficulty, and the poem called "England's Day."

' In the summer of 1869, while residing during the hot weather in a house on Minchinhampton Common, he met with a second accident, from the indirect effects of which he was destined never to recover. He was trying a recently purchased mare, before allowing the lady for whom it was intended to mount, when the animal, suddenly developing viciousness, after exhausting all efforts to throw her rider, reared and fell over with and on him. When he slowly began to regain the use of his limbs, it was found impossible for him to resume the constant exercise in the open air which had hitherto been the chief means towards his restoration. In 1871 the residence of Noke Place was exchanged for one fourteen miles on the other side of Gloucester, in a beautiful district above the Stroud valley. Barton End House, old-fashioned, ample, homelike, with its gardens and plantations, and its outlook on softly-sloping meadows and orchards and the grey roofs of the near hamlet, was an ideal home for the English poet, to whom this kind of English scenery had always been especially attractive. The last three years of his life were spent here, under the almost constant pressure of disabling weakness. But nothing could dull the keenness of his delight in the natural loveliness by which he was surrounded, the various phases of which, when no longer able to go out of doors, he never tired of watching from his windows. Mr. Dobell continued, moreover, to be earnestly concerned about public affairs, and the results of his mature thought often took

form in prose or verse, on social, artistic, national or international questions of the day. A mass of material for future work remains among his MS. fragments, many of which are, even in their incomplete form, well worthy of publication. His daily life was such as most men of his tameless energy would have found unbearably monotonous; but he lived in an atmosphere of fresh thought, and his keen perception of humour helped to keep around him the flow and stir of healthy human life. To the last he was the most sunshiny of invalids; nothing could exhaust his cheerfulness, nor wear out the sweetness of his patience; his innate brightness and elasticity of mind was strengthened and elevated by spiritual culture into something holier and nobler than mere temperament. But with the spring of 1874 came a train of circumstances which involved for him more than one shock of peculiar pain, and necessitated mental wear and tear of a kind for which he was now absolutely unfit; so that the constitution which had gallantly struggled through so much was vanquished at last.'

The Poet's friend then contributes some pages of general remark, from which we extract the following:—  
'He whom some of his critics persisted in identifying with the morbid and dreamy "Balder" was one of the most healthy-minded and sagaciously practical of men; far from being a cynic or misanthrope, he "loved his kind" in no mere theoretic sense; his instincts were pre-eminently social, with nothing of that shy reserve held to be characteristic of his race; he encouraged every opportunity of intercourse with his fellows of whatever class, and whether

it was a labourer breaking stones on the highway, or a cultured fellow-passenger on a journey with whom occasion led to some brief converse, he never departed from one of these chance encounters without leaving an impression of brightness and kindness not soon to be forgotten. He was free from all those vices, as from all those weaknesses, often held to belong to the artistic life; he burned no midnight oil in pursuit of fitting seasons of inspiration: he loved simple fare and the freshness of the morning. Yet he was too genial to be an ascetic, and amid his own "plain living and high thinking" exercised towards others a generous and refined hospitality. He was a most careful critic, keenly perceiving defects of imagination or faults of style; but penetrating at once, wherever it existed, to the essential excellence of book or picture, sketch or poem, political creed or popular enthusiasm. Many dicta of his so-called Toryism are now accepted by acknowledged Liberals; but his philosophy, political as well as religious, started from a loftier basis, and took "an ampler range" than that which is commonly appreciated by most newspaper and magazine readers or writers. A thinker above all things, he was nevertheless not unskilled in active exercises, seldom so valued by one whose resources are so independent of them. He was expert in riding and driving, and was a good shot, taking great pleasure in rifle-practice long before volunteering made it a fashion; he had a loving knowledge of horses and dogs (his name may be familiar to some, less in connection with books than as the owner of a rare and peculiarly beautiful breed of deer-hounds),



and was keenly interested in hunting and all country sports.

‘Mr. Dobell was loved to enthusiasm by all children and young people with whom he came in contact: he had a rare power not only of amusing but of insensibly arousing and elevating their minds. Few who have been privileged to meet him in this relationship will forget the charm of his talk, the kindness of his sympathy, the gentleness of his counsel. His interests being so wide he was singularly free from the tendency—to which deep thinkers are prone—to let one idea override the rest or to be engrossed by one subject to the neglect of others. He could without effort turn his mind from the great public matters to which we have referred, to some simple village incident or affair of domestic import. There was not a cottager within the range of his daily exercise who had not learnt to know the bright face and kindly voice, and few who had not cause to be grateful to the considerate adviser as well as to his liberal hand. Only those who knew him best could estimate the resources of the intellect that was for so many years mysteriously fettered from its fitting work. It may be hoped that among the papers he has left are some treating of the religious subjects which were ever dominant in his mind, and which may evidence in words as he did in life the living Faith, at once deeply reverent and enlightened, in God and Christ, which was never shaken by temptations of the intellect nor weakened by years of suffering and privation.’ The fact of Mr. Dobell’s belonging to no one of

the recognised denominations suggests the question and the answer of Schiller :

‘ Welche Religion ich bekenne? Keine von Allen  
Die du mir nennst. Und warum Keine? Aus Religion.’

We may here appropriately quote a sentence, found among his memoranda, which seems to us to bear as striking witness to the width of his views as did his whole ‘ Art zu seyn ’ to the reality of his convictions. ‘ Whatever things are true for Man the Immortal I call religion, and, in this sense, religion is the only worthy object of Human Study.’

A few words are all that, in anticipation of a fuller biography, it seems needful here to add to these notes.

Latterly Mr. Dobell’s attacks of illness to some slight extent affected his memory, but he remained till within two or three weeks of his death in the full possession of his other intellectual powers, drawing round him, by the charm of his presence, a small circle of devoted friends, and enlisting the love and gratitude of all with whom he came in contact, by unostentatious but ever active beneficence. At the last, his disease assumed an acuter form and he passed through the cloud-land of delirium to his rest : without a murmur spent on broken hopes and noble ambitions so largely wrecked ; in his own words, ‘ trusting not God the less for an unanswered prayer.’ ‘ Vir pietate egregius, valde defendus amicus.’

Mr. Dobell’s true place among the English Poets of this century seems to us, in spite of manifest faults which critics will variously estimate, to be a high and permanent one. He belonged to the spasmodic school, with which

he was, during his residence in Edinburgh, topographically associated, in virtue of defects shared with men indefinitely his inferiors. Of these the chief were, occasional violences and frequent involutions of expression, recalling the conceits of Donne and others of the so-called metaphysical School of the seventeenth century ; a tantalizing excess of metaphor, a deficient sense of artistic proportion, and a weakness, latterly outgrown, for outré 'fine things.' But from the graver intellectual and moral offences of the galvanic, finical and later sentimental schools, from their subordination of sense to sound, their 'bubbles blown from minds incompetent,' their scorn of study and consequent ignorance, their egotistical disregard of all beyond themselves and their art, he was wholly free. Though unequal, his verse at its best is in strength and delicacy seldom surpassed by that of any of his contemporaries : his imagery, though redundant, is remarkably original and incisive. But the great merit of his work is that it is steeped in that higher atmosphere towards which it is the aim of all enduring literature to raise our spirits. His most attractive and in this age most *distinctive* quality as an author is the freshness of thought and depth of sympathy with the nobler aspirations of our nature—only possible to noble souls—and which endeared him to all who were privileged to enjoy his society. The charm of Mr. Dobell's conversation has been often remarked : few brilliant talkers have had at their command a greater variety of unexpected illustrations : few trained metaphysicians have exhibited acuter reasoning power. In

close argument—during which he was ready to listen as well as to assert—he found few masters. On the other hand his victories did not always carry conviction ; for his love of analysis led him, even when dealing with themes of every-day life, into super-subtle distinctions. His real fascination lay in the incommunicable beauty of a character in which masculine and feminine elements, strength and tenderness, were almost uniquely blended. Manliness in its highest attributes of courage, energy, and independence pervaded his life. It often occurred to us that Mr. Dobell would have made a great general ; he was absolutely without fear, and being under all circumstances perfect master of himself, was pre-eminently fit to master and command others. Pure without pedantry, he had the ‘ scorn of scorn ’ for every form of falsehood ; but the range of his charity was limited only by his love of truth. The sense of humour, comparatively absent from his writings, showed itself in the delicate irony of his rare rebukes. His loyalty to friendship—that half-forgotten virtue of an earlier age—has never been surpassed. He was chivalrous to an extreme, and this sometimes led his judgment astray on behalf of fallen causes, with a touch of lofty yet gracious mannerism which recalled the ideal of a Castilian knight. A radical reformer in some directions, he had little sympathy with the extreme phases of democracy, and held the tyranny of mobs and autocrats in equal aversion. Like those of most poets, his theoretical politics had a visionary side : but he was far from being a mere dreamer. Of practical well-doing towards the poor, of encouragement to the young

and all who were struggling for a recognition of their merits, he was never weary : for of the jealousy which is one of the main blots of our literature, he had not a tinge. He could afford to be generous : and to almost all with whom he came in contact, grateful or ungrateful, he had done some kindnesses. His criticisms on men, books and systems, if not always sound, were invariably valuable : everything he said was so suggestive that he awoke in his listeners a consciousness of new capacities as well as of new duties. His hospitality was bestowed under guise of receiving a favour. His house was full of ' sounds and sweet sights that give delight and hurt not.' To live with him a few days was to breathe a serener air. ' To know him was a liberal education.' An old chronicler writes of Sir Philip Sidney : ' It pleased God that he should be born on earth as a sample of ancient virtue.' His friends will be pardoned for venturing to apply these words to Sydney Dobell.

J. N.

# THE ROMAN.

A DRAMATIC POEM.

VOL. I.

B



NOTE  
TO THE  
SECOND EDITION OF 'THE ROMAN.'

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THAT I suffer this Second Edition to go forth without the customary revision and correction, requires, in modesty, a word of explanation.

Of the faults of the book I am fully conscious. I knew them when it went to press, I never forgot them in the applause of a generous reception, and if I ever look into it again they will, doubtless, be additionally offensive.

But I did my best in 1849 ; and in 1852 I will not alter what was done. Whether I can yield purer poetry at eight and twenty than when I wrote 'The Roman' at twenty-five, my readers may in due time have occasion to consider ; but —classic authority to the contrary notwithstanding—I hold that to beautify the work of that day by passing some of its members through the mind of this, were to borrow the expedient of that ambitious artisan, who recast the limbs of Cupid in the mould of Psyche.

What I have written I have written. The words 'Dramatic Poem' in the Title are not mine. 'Poetry' and 'A Poem' are not necessarily æquipollents. In the next few years I hope to write more 'Poetry ;' ten years hence, if God please, A POEM.

S. Y.

FEB. 1852.





# THE ROMAN.

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## SCENE I.

A PLAIN IN ITALY—AN ANCIENT BATTLE-FIELD.

TIME, EVENING.

*Persons.*—VITTORIO SANTO, a *Missionary of Freedom.*  
*He has gone out, disguised as a Monk, to preach the*  
*Unity of Italy, the Overthrow of Austrian Domination,*  
*and the Restoration of a great Roman Republic.*—*A*  
*number of Youths and Maidens, singing as they dance.*  
*'The Monk' is musing.*

*Enter Dancers.*

*Dancers.* Sing lowly, foot slowly, oh why should we  
chase

The hour that gives heaven to this earthly embrace?  
To-morrow, to-morrow, is dreary and lonely;  
Then love as they love who would live to love only!  
Closer yet, eyes of jet,—breasts fair and sweet!  
No eyes flash like those eyes that flash as they meet!  
Weave brightly, wear lightly, the warm-woven chain,  
Love on for to-night if we ne'er love again.

Fond youths ! happy maidens ! we are not alone !  
 Bright steps and sweet voices keep pace with our own.  
 Love-lorn Lusignuolo, the soft-sighing breeze,  
 The rose with the zephyr, the wind with the trees.  
 While Heaven, blushing pleasure, is full of love-notes,  
 Soft down the sweet measure the fairy world floats.

*The Monk advances, meets the Dancers, and points  
 to the turf at their feet.*

*The Monk.* Do you see nothing there,  
 There, where the unrespective grass grows green,  
 There at your very feet ? Nay, not one step !  
 'Twould touch it ! 'twould profane it ! Palsied be  
 The limb that treads that ground ! There is a grave—  
 There is a grave ;—I saw it with these eyes—  
 A grave ! I saw it with these eyes ! It holds—  
 It holds—oh Heaven !—MY MOTHER !

*One of the Revellers.* Peace, good Padre,  
 Look to thy beads. The turf is level here.  
 Comrades ! strike up ! ' Sing lowly, foot——

*The Monk.* Who steps,  
 Steps first on me. I say there is a grave,  
 I say it is my mother's : that I loved her,  
 Ay, loved her with more passion than the maddest  
 Lover among ye clasps his one-day wife !  
 And I steal forth to keep my twilight vigil,  
 And you come here to dance upon my heart.  
 You come and—with the world at will for dalliance,  
 The whole hot world—deny me that small grave

Whose bitter margin these poor knees know better  
 Than your accustom'd feet the well-worn path  
 To your best harlot's bower. The turf is fair !  
 Have I not kept it green with tears, my mother ?  
 You lustful sons of lax-eyed lewdness, do you  
 Come here to sing above her bones, and mock me,  
 Because my flesh and blood cry out, ' God save them ?'  
 May the Heaven's blight——

*One of the Revellers.*                      Nay, holy father, nay,  
 We would not harm thee. Be it as thou wilt.  
 Holy Madonna ! there is little dust  
 In this old land, but has been son or mother  
 In its own day. What ho ! my merry friends,  
 Come, we must dance upon some other grave.  
 Farewell, good father !

*Another Reveller.*                      Save you, father !

*Another.*    Think not,

We would insult thy sorrow.

*The Monk.*    Well, forgive me.

I pray you listen how I loved my mother,  
 And you will weep with me. She loved me, nurst me,  
 And fed my soul with light. Morning and Even  
 Praying, I sent that soul into her eyes,  
 And knew what Heaven was though I was a child.  
 I grew in stature, and she grew in goodness.  
 I was a grave child ; looking on her taught me  
 To love the beautiful : and I had thoughts  
 Of Paradise, when other men have hardly

Look'd out of doors on earth. (Alas ! alas !  
That I have also learn'd to look on earth  
When other men see heaven.) I toil'd, but ever  
As I became more holy, she seem'd holier ;  
Even as when climbing mountain-tops the sky  
Grows ampler, higher, purer as ye rise.  
Let me believe no more. No, do not ask me  
How I repaid my mother. O thou saint,  
That lookest on me day and night from heaven  
And smilest, I have given thee tears for tears,  
Anguish for anguish, woe for woe. Forgive me  
If, in the spirit of ineffable penance,  
In words, I waken up the guilt that sleeps.  
Let not the sound afflict thine heaven, or colour  
That pale, tear-blotted record which the angels  
Keep of my sins. We left her. I and all  
The brothers that her milk had fed. We left her—  
And strange dark robbers, with unwonted names,  
Abused her ! bound her ! pillaged her ! profaned her !  
Bound her clasped hands, and gagg'd the trembling lips  
That pray'd for her lost children. And we stood  
And she knelt to us, and we saw her kneel,  
And look'd upon her coldly and denied, her !  
Denied her in her agony—and counted  
Before her sanguine eyes the gold that bought  
Her pangs. We stood——

*One of the Revellers.* Nay, thou cowl'd ruffian ! hold !  
There's vengeance for thee yet ! Dost thou come here

To blast our hearing with thy damned crimes?  
Seize on him, comrades, tear him limb from limb!

*The Monk.* Yes, seize him! tear him! tear him! he  
will bless thee

If thy device can work a deeper pain  
Than he will welcome and has suffer'd. Tear him!  
But, friends, not yet. Hear her last tortures. Then  
Find, if ye can, some direr pang for me.  
The Robbers wearied, and they bade us hold her,  
Lest her death-struggles should get free. She look'd  
Upon me with the face that lit my childhood,  
She called me with the voices of old times,  
She blest me in her madness. But, they show'd us  
Gold, and we seized upon her, held her, bound her,  
Smote her. She murmur'd kind words, and I gave her  
Blows.

*One Auditor.* Fiend!

*Another.* Hound!

*Another.* Demon!

*Another.* Strike him!

*Another.* Hold him down!

Kill him for hours!

*The Monk.* Why how now, countrymen?  
How now, you slaves that should be Romans? Ah!  
And you will kill me that I smote my mother?  
Well done, well done, a righteous doom! I smote  
My mother? Hold! My mother, did I say?  
My mother? Mine, yours, ours!

*One Auditor.*

Seize him.

*All.*

Die, liar!

Die.

*The Monk.* But my brothers—will you seize my brothers?

What! will you let that cursed band escape  
That hoard the very gold that slew her? Make  
A full end. Finish up the work. You cowards!  
What! you can pounce on an unarm'd poor man,  
But tremble at the gilded traitors!

*All.*

Name them!

They shall die! Point them out! where are they?

*The Monk.*

HERE!

You are my brothers. And my mother was  
Yours. And each man among you day by day  
Takes, bowing, the same price that sold my mother,  
And does not blush. Her name is ROME. Look round,  
And see those features which the sun himself  
Can hardly leave for fondness. Look upon  
Her mountain bosom, where the very sky  
Beholds with passion: and with the last proud  
Imperial sorrow of dejected empire,  
She wraps the purple round her outraged breast,  
And even in fetters cannot be a slave.  
Look on the world's best glory and worst shame.  
You cannot count her beauties or her chains,  
You cannot know her pangs or her endurance.  
You, whom propitious skies may hardly coax

To threescore years and ten. Your giant fathers  
Call'd Atlas demigod. But what is she,  
Who, worn with eighteen centuries of bondage,  
Stands manacled before the world, and bears  
Two hemispheres—innumerable wrongs,  
Illimitable glories. Oh, thou heart  
That art most tortured, look on her and say  
If there be any thing in earth or heaven,  
In earth or heaven—now that Christ weeps no longer—  
So most divinely sad. Look on her. Listen  
To all the tongues with which the earth cries out.  
Flowers, fountains, winds, woods, spring and summer  
incense,  
Morning and eve—these are her voices—hear them !  
Remember how, in the old innocent days  
Of your young childhood, these sang blessings on you.  
Remember how you danced to those same voices,  
And sank down tired, and slept in joy, not doubting  
That they would sing to-morrow ; and remember  
How when some hearts that danced in those old days,  
And worn out laid them down, and have not waken'd,  
Gave back no answer to the morning sun,  
She took them to her mother's breast and still  
Holds them unwearied, singing by their slumbers,  
And though you have forgotten them remembers  
To strew their unregarded graves with flowers.  
Oh those old days, those canonizèd days !  
Oh that bright realm of sublunary heaven,



Wherein they walk'd in haloes of sweet light,  
And we look'd up, unfearing, and drew near  
And learnt of them what no succeeding times  
Can tell us since of joy ;—for so, being angels,  
They suffer'd little children. Oh those days !  
Why is it that we hear them now no more ?  
And the same destiny that brought us pangs  
Took every balsam hence ? Did we wake up  
From infancy's last slumber in a new  
And colder world ? My mother, thou shalt answer !  
I hear thee—see thee. The same soul informs  
The present that look'd once through undimm'd eyes  
In Childhood's past. What though it shines through  
tears ?  
It shines. What though it speaks with trembling lips,  
Tuned to such grief that they say bright words sadly ?  
It speaks. And by that speech thou art the mother  
That bore us ! Oh you sons of hers, remember  
When joy had grown to passion, and high youth  
Had aim'd the shafts that lay in Childhood's quiver,  
If you have ever gone out, (and each Roman  
Heart must have note of one such better day,)  
Full of high thoughts, ambitions, destinies,  
And stood, downcast, among her ruin'd altars,  
And fed the shameful present with the past ;  
And felt thy soul on the stern food grow up  
To the old Roman stature : and hast started  
To feel a hundred nameless things, which Kings

Call sins,—and Patriots, virtues : and self-judged,  
Conscious and purple with the glorious treason,  
Hast lifted flashing eyes, bold with great futures,  
And in one glance challenged her earth, seas, skies,  
And they have said, 'WELL DONE.' And thou hast felt  
Like a proud child whom a proud mother blesses.  
Ah! your brows kindle! What! I have said well?  
What! there are some among you who have been  
The heroes of an hour? you men of Parma,  
What! you were Romans once! you worse than slaves,  
Who, being Romans once, are men of Parma!  
Tried on the Roman habit, and could wear it  
But a short hour on your degenerate limbs!  
Sons of the empress of the world, and slaves  
To powers a Roman bondman would not count  
Upon his fingers on a holiday!  
Do not believe me yet. She is no mother,  
Who has but nursed your joy and pride. Remember,  
If thou hast ever wept without a heart  
To catch one tear, and in the lonely anguish  
Of thy neglected agony look'd out  
On this immortal world, and seen—love-stricken—  
Light after light her shadowy joys take up  
Thy lorn peculiar sorrow, till thy soul  
Seem'd shed upon the universe, and grief,  
Deponent of its separate sadness, clung  
To the stupendous dolour of all things,  
And wept with the great mourner, and smiled with her

When she came back to sunshine—with the joy  
Of a young child after the first great grief  
Wherein a mother's holy words first spake  
To the young heart of God. But I am dreaming ;  
You have not wept as I have. Yet remember,  
If she hath shown you softer signs than these—  
If there are none among you who have given  
To her chaste beauty, to the woods and mountains,  
And lone dim places, sorrowfully sweet,  
Where love first learns to hear himself, and blush not—  
Thoughts which you would deny me at confession,  
Thoughts which, although the peril of a soul  
Hung on their utterance, would have gone unborn  
In silence down to hell, unblest, unshriven,  
And, in despairing coyness, daring all,  
Because they could dare nothing. Like the shy  
Scared bird, to which the serpent's jaws are better  
Than his rude eyes. And yet you gave them to HER,  
And these same trembling phantasies went forth,  
To meet the storms that shake the Apennines,  
And did not fear. And so you call'd her MOTHER,  
And so the invisible in you confest  
The unseen in her ; and so you bore your witness  
To her august maternity, and she  
Reflected back the troth. Remember, *so*  
Great Romulus and those who after him  
Built the Eternal City, and their own  
Twin-born eternity—even as the workman

Is greater than the work—stood at her knee,  
And brighten'd in her blessing ; and remember  
If they were sons like you ! What ! can dead names  
Stir living blood ? Fear not, my countrymen !  
They are not German chieftains that I spoke of.  
Tremble not, brethren, they are not our lords.  
*Our* lords ! they conquered men. They are some souls  
That once took flesh and blood in Italy,  
And thought it was a land to draw free breath in,  
And drew it long, and died here ; and since live  
Everywhere else. What ! your brows darken ! what !  
I wrong'd you foully ; 'twas no fear that daubed them :  
What ! your cheeks flush as some old soldier's child,  
Glows at inglorious ease when a chance tongue  
Speaks of the triumph where his father fell !  
What then ! these dead are yours ! Men, what are they ?  
What are they ?—ask the world and it shall answer.  
And *you* ? True, true, you have your creed ; you tell me  
That twice a thousand years have not outworn  
The empire in that blood of theirs that flows  
In your dull veins. You tell me you are Romans !  
Yet they were lords and you are slaves ; the earth  
Heard them and shook. It shakes, perchance, for you ;  
Shakes with the laugh of scorn that there are things  
Who lick the dust that falls from Austrian feet,  
And call the gods their fathers ! Bear with me,  
I am not here to reckon up your shames,  
I will know nothing here but my wrong'd mother.

I cry before heaven she is yours. That you  
May kill me for the part I bore, and then  
Do judgment on yourselves. Look on that mother  
Whose teeming loins peopled with gods and heroes  
Earth and Olympus—sold to slaves whose base  
Barbarian passions had been proud to swell  
In death a Roman pageant. Every limb  
Own'd by some separate savage—each charm lent  
To some peculiar lust. The form that served  
The world for signs of beauty, parcell'd out  
A carcase on the shambles, where small kings,  
Like unclean birds, hang round the expected carrion,  
And chaffer for the corpse which shall not die !  
Look on that mother and behold her sons !  
Alas, she might be Rome if there were Romans !  
Look on that mother ! Wilt thou know that death  
Can have no part in Beauty ? Cast to-day  
A seed into the earth, and it shall bear thee  
The flowers that waved in the Egyptian hair  
Of Pharaoh's daughter ! Look upon that mother—  
Listen, ye slaves, who gaze on her distress,  
And turn to dwell with clamorous descant,  
And prying eye, on some strange small device  
Upon her chains. In no imperial feature,  
In no sublime perfection, is she less  
Than the world's empress, the earth's paragon,  
Except these bonds. These bonds ? Break them. Un-  
bind,

Unbind Andromeda ! She was not born  
To stand and shiver in the northern blast,  
Or fester on a foreign rock, or bear  
Rude licence of the unrespective waves.  
She is a queen ! a goddess ! a king's daughter !  
What though her loveliness defied the heavens ;  
Unbind her, she shall fill them ! Man, unbind her,  
And, goddess as she is, she owns thee, loves thee,  
Crowns thee ! And is there none to break thy chains,  
My country ? Is there none, sons of my mother ?  
Strike, and the spell is broken. You behold her  
Suppliant of suppliants. Strike ! and she shall stand  
Forth in her awful beauty, more divine  
Than death or mortal sorrow ; clothing all  
The wrecks and ruins of disastrous days  
In old-world glory—even as the first spring  
After the deluge. Why should we despair ?  
The heroes whom your fathers took for gods,  
Walk'd in her brightness, and received no more  
Than she gives back to you, who are not heroes,  
And have not yet been men. They toil'd and bled,  
And knew themselves immortal, when they hung  
Their names upon *her* altars ; ask'd no fate  
But that which you inherit and disdain  
To call it heritage—subdued the world,  
And with superior scorn heard its lip-service,  
And bade it call them ROMANS, and believe  
Earth had no haughtier name. Be not deceived.

They stood on Roman, you on Parman ground,  
But yet this mould is the same ground they stood on.  
The evening wind, that passes by us now,  
To *their* proud senses was the evening wind.  
These are the hills, and these the plains, whereby  
The Roman shepherd fed his golden flocks,  
And kings look'd from their distant lands, and thought  
him

Greater than they. The masters of the world  
Heard the same streams that speak to you, its slaves.  
These rocks were their rocks, and their Roman spring  
Brought, year by year, the very self-same blossoms,  
(The self-same blossoms, but they stood for crowns.)  
The flowers beneath their feet had the same perfume  
As those you tread on—do they scorn your tread?  
They saw your stars; and when the sun went down,  
The mountains on his face set the same signs  
To their eyes as to yours. O thou unseen  
Rome of their love,—immaculate and free!  
Thou who didst sit amid the Apennines,  
And looking forth upon the conscious world,  
Which heard thee and obey'd, beheld thy children  
From sea to sea! Yes, we are here, my mother,  
And here beside thy mountain throne we call thee.  
Ascend, thou uncrown'd queen! Yet a few days,  
Yet a few days, and all is past. Behold  
Even now, the harvest seedeth, and the ear  
Bends rich with death. Yet a few days, my mother,

And thou shalt hear the shouting of the reapers,  
And we who sharp the sickle shall ring out  
The harvest-home. Nay, look not on me, mother,  
Look not on me in thy sublime despair ;  
Thou shalt be free ! I see it all, my mother,  
Thy golden fetters, thy profanèd limbs,  
Thy toils, thy stripes, thine agonies, thy scars,  
And thine undying beauty. Yes, all, all,  
And all for us and by us. Look not on me.  
Ay ! lift thy canker'd hands to heaven, earth hath not  
Room for so vast a wrong. Thou shalt be free,  
Thou shalt be free, before the heavens I swear it !  
By thy long agony, thy bloody sweat,  
Thy passion of a thousand years, thy glory,  
Thy pride, thy shame, thy worlds subdued and lost,  
Thou shalt be free ! By thine eternal youth,  
And co-eternal utterless dishonour—  
Past, present, future, life and death, all oaths,  
Which may bind earth and heaven, mother, I swear it.  
We know we have dishonour'd thee. We know  
All thou canst tell the angels. At thy feet,  
The feet where kings have trembled, we confess,  
And weep ; and only bid thee live, my mother,  
To see how we can die. Thou shalt be free !  
By all our sins, and all thy wrongs we swear it.  
We swear it, mother, by the thousand omens  
That heave this pregnant time. Tempests for whom  
The Alps lack wombs—quick earthquakes—hurricanes



That moan and chafe, and thunder for the light,  
 And must be native here. Hark, hark, the angel !  
 I see the birthday in the imminent skies !  
 Clouds break in fire. Earth yawns. The exulting thunder  
 Shouts havoc to the whirlwinds. And men hear,  
 Amid the terrors of consenting storms,  
 Floods, rocking worlds, mad seas and rending mountains,  
 Above the infinite clash, one long great cry,  
 THOU SHALT BE FREE !

[*The audience have one by one stolen away. The MONK,  
 recovering from his enthusiasm, finds himself alone.*

*The Monk.*

Ah solitude ! and have I

Raved to the winds ?

[*A pause.*

Bow not thy queenly head,  
 Beat not thy breast ; they do not leave *thee*, mother !  
 We have no strength to meet the offended terrors  
 Of thy chaste eyes. Yet a few days, my mother,  
 And when the fire of expiation burns,  
 Thou shalt confess thy children. Oh, bear with us,  
 Hath the set sun forsaken thee ? We know  
 All that thou art, and we are : and if, mother,  
 The unused weight of the ineffable knowledge  
 Bendeth our souls, forgive us. [*Another long pause.*

Yes, *all* gone !

And not one word—one pitiful cheap word—  
 One look that might have brighten'd into promise !  
 All faint, pale, recreant, slavish, lost. No cur  
 That sniffs the distant bear, and sneaks downcast

With craven tail and miscreant trepidation  
To kennel and to collar, could slink home  
With a more prone abasement. *[Another long pause.*

Kill me ! kill me !

Thine hour is not yet come. Then give me mine !  
Thou must endure, my mother, I have taken  
A meteor for the dawn. Thou must endure,  
And toil, and weep.

Oh, thou offended majesty ! my heart  
Beats here for thee. Strike it ! Thou must endure.

I may not, at the peril of my soul,  
Give thee aught other counsel ; and I would not  
For many souls that any man should dare  
To give thee this and live. Alas ! when truth  
Is treason, and the crime of what we do  
Transcends all sins but the more damning guilt  
Of doing aught beside. *[Another pause.*

Or is it, mother,  
That thou hast chosen ill ? That I, the dreamer,  
Catch not the language of these waking men ?  
With our humanity infirm upon us,  
My God ! it is a fearful thing to stand  
Alone, beneath the weight of a great cause  
And a propitious time ! *[Another pause.*

Mother ! *[A long pause.*

Be patient,

O thou eternal and upbraiding Presence,  
Which fillest heaven and earth with witness ; be

What thou hast been : and, if thou canst, forgive  
What I can not forgive ; and let me be  
What I was. Take, take back this terrible sight !  
This sight that passeth the sweet boundary  
Of man's allotted world. Let me look forth  
And see green fields, hills, trees, and soulless waters  
Give back my ignorance. Why should my sense  
Be cursed with this intolerable knowledge ?  
Let me go back to bondage. What am I,  
That I am tortured to supernal uses,  
Who have not died ; and see the sights of angels  
With mortal eyes ? Unhand me, mother ! why  
Must I, so many years removed from death,  
Be young and have no youth ? What have I done  
That all thy millions look on thee with smiles,  
And I with madness ? Why must I be great ?  
When did I ask this boon ? Why is the dull,  
Smooth, unctuous current of contented baseness  
Forbidden to me only ? What art thou,  
Magician ! that who serves thee hath henceforth  
No part on earth beside ? That I am doom'd—  
Am doom'd to preach in unknown tongues, and know  
What no man will believe ? To strive, and weep,  
And labour with impossible griefs and woes,  
That kill me in the birth ? That I am thus,  
That I am thus, who once was calm, proud, happy,—  
Ay, you may smile, you ancient sorrows,—happy.  
Stay ! happy ? And a slave ?        [*A very long pause.*]

If I must see thee,  
If it must be, if it must be, my mother !  
If it must be, and God vouchsafes the heart  
No gift to unlearn truth ; if the soul never  
Can twice be virgin ? if the eye that strikes  
Upon the hidden path to the unseen  
Is henceforth for two worlds ; if the sad fruit  
Of knowledge dwells for ever on the lip,  
And if thy face once seen, to me, O thou  
Unutterable sadness ! must henceforth  
Look day and night from all things ; grant me this,  
That thine immortal sorrow will remember  
How little we can grieve who are but dust.  
Make me the servant, not the partner, mother, -  
Of woes, for whose omnipotence of pain  
I have no organs. Suffer that I give  
Time and endurance for impossible passion ;  
Perchance accumulated pangs may teach me  
One throe of thy distress. How canst thou think  
My soul can contain thine ?

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## SCENE II.

## TIME AND PLACE AS IN SCENE I.

FRANCESCA, *a young girl, one of the Auditors in SCENE I., has remained hidden among the trees. The Monk, silent, musing.*

*Francesca (musing).* While he yet spake I waited for  
a pause,

And now, if I could dare to hear my voice  
In this most awful silence, it should pray  
That he would speak again. You heavens, you heavens,  
Lend me your language. This progressive thought,  
This unit-bearing speech, whose best exertion  
Is but dexterity, the juggler's sleight,  
That with facility of motion cheats  
The eye, whose noblest effort can but haste  
The single ball of phantasy, and make  
Succession seem coincidence, is not  
For such an hour. Lend me some tongue, you heavens,  
Worthy of gods : in whose celestial sense  
The present, past, and future of the soul  
Sink down as one ; even as these dews to-night  
Fall from a thousand stars.

He hears. He turns.

Now, now, ye saints !

*The Monk (turning and perceiving her).* Lady, what  
wouldst thou? [*She is silent.*]

Child,

What wouldst thou?

*Francesca.* I have heard thee. Dost thou ask?

*The Monk (pointing to the dancers in the far distance).*

Did they not hear? Daughter, persuade me this,  
And I will bless thee.

*Francesca (taking a flower from her breast).* Is that  
rosebud sweet?

I pluck'd it from a thicket as I pass'd ;  
One day, perhaps, some cottage plot ; but now  
Given up to dominance of vulgar thorns,  
And weeds of deadlier moral. Yet methinks  
'Tis still a rose. Wilt thou receive it?

*The Monk.* Ay.

*Francesca.* I am that rose, my father, so accept  
Me.

*The Monk.* Child, I will.

*Francesca.* I have heard much to-night  
Of Roman deeds, of sages, and of heroes,  
Of sons who loved, and sons who have betray'd.  
Hath Rome no daughters to repeat her beauty,  
Renew the model of old time, and teach  
Her sons to love the mother in the child?  
Was Rome, my father, built and peopled by  
One sex? The very marble of your ruins  
Looks masculine. In heart I roam about them,

But whereso'er my female soul peers in  
—Even to the temple courts—some bearded image  
Cries Privilege. Doth Salique law entail  
The heritage of glory? Is there nothing,  
Nothing, my father, in the work of freedom  
For woman's hand to do?

*The Monk.* The past, that book  
Of demonstrated theorems, lies open.  
Why seek my poor unproved hypothesis,  
When God hath solved for thee? Child, choose thy  
page.

Here bleeds Lucretia. Rome hath now ten Tarquins  
(Ten Tarquins, but we call them dukes and kings).  
There, Arria. Many a Pætus lives to-night  
Who would have given right joyfully to freedom  
The Roman heart that makes a sorry slave,  
If Arria would have shown him how to die.  
Virginia! Appius—nay, we have no state  
Where Appius would have deign'd to be a despot.  
But that divine idea incarnate in  
Virginia's corse, and teeming in the blood  
Which quickening in your Roman ground grew up  
A national virginity—*that* glory,  
Though it reach up to heaven, may make its footstool  
Wherever there is earth enough to die on.  
Remember her who——

*Francesca.* Hear me yet, my father,  
And I will light thee to a sterner text

Than thou hast heart to preach from.

Yonder castle

Darkening the hill——

*The Monk.* Child, the days come when where  
The deadliest stronghold of its lordliest keep  
Spreads the dank flags, tear-damp, of its most dark  
Detested dungeon, thou—*not I*—shalt see  
The wild thyme and the bee.

*Francesca.* Is there nought writ  
Of Tullia, who once drove the car of blood  
Over her father's corse? Sir, from those walls  
My father rules.

*The Monk (after some silence).* Shall Paul stop  
preaching lest  
Eutychus sleep? In the Damascene way  
Shall his eyes shut out light from heaven? Not though  
It scorch them blind! Truth is a god, my child;  
Rear thou the altar, he himself provides  
The lamb. The great judge, Truth, who takes thy  
verdict,  
Avenge a false finding though it save  
Thy brother's soul. Truth is the equal sun,  
Ripening no less the hemlock than the vine.  
Truth is the flash that turns aside no more  
For castle than for cot. Truth is a spear  
Thrown by the blind. Truth is a Nemesis  
Which leadeth her beloved by the hand  
Through all things; giving him no task to break



A bruised reed, but bidding him stand firm  
Though she crush worlds.

*Francesca.* Master ! I would serve Truth.

*The Monk (meditates, then speaks).* Oh Freedom !  
ruddy goddess of the hill,

Say, from that breezy ledge of genial rock,  
Where, yet ere twilight, with thine eastward face  
Turn'd to to-morrow's sunrise, thou hast laid  
Thy joyous limbs, dew-bathed—which day scarce tames  
To sleep—oh say, is this pale dreamer thine ?  
Go home, poor child, thou hast thy burden ; I  
Add nothing.

*Francesca.* Thou canst speak in parables,  
Or with stern silence stifle the poor heart  
That breathes thy words ; but, father, I will sit  
Here at thy feet.

*The Monk.* So does my dog ; but do I  
Take him to council ?

*Francesca.* Yet thou givest him  
To watch thee day and night. Grant me no less.

*The Monk.* Oh tyrant's daughter, lovest thou Roman  
thus ?

*Francesca.* Ay.

*The Monk (musing).* Can the heart be less than what  
it holds ?

The fetter'd slave that in his fetters slays  
His lord, has strength to break them. Arms that break  
Their chains have strength to throw them in the sea.

Perchance I have judged ill. Yes. Unattaint,  
Perchance, the Arethusan blood of Rome  
Hath coursed the conduit of a tyrant's veins,  
And from the fetid entrails of the earth  
Springs up Diana's fountain

Soul, soul, soul,

Wilt thou again believe? Are figs of thistles?  
Hast thou not tasted of the Dead-Sea fruits?  
The clouds are midnight with to-morrow's storm:  
Wilt thou launch freedom in a cockle-shell?  
What! Patriot, dost thou pay the gold of Rome  
For phantom ship to skim ærial waves  
Or desert mirage? Bah! what falconer  
Shall man this butterfly-hawk? Will that nice beak  
Stoop to a bloody lure?

Poor child, poor child,

The feeblest tongue that freemen use will deafen  
These ears where every word went bowing in!  
These pamper'd ears, born in the purple chamber  
Of silken state, these soft voluptuous ears,  
Dainty and fancy-fed, that of the tribe  
Of many-visaged language, know alone  
That bastard and emasculated speech  
That does court-embassies. That perfumed minion,  
Which runs the powder'd errands of intrigue;  
That slave-born slave, that audible obeisance  
Which on the silver plate of compliment  
Exchanges rotten hearts. That sleek thrice-curl'd

Prim arbiter of vile proprieties,  
Whose wax-light days begin and end with fashion ;  
That velvet impotent, whose effete passions  
Wait smiling the fantastic lusts of kings.

How shall *she* bear the sound when a strong land  
In the rude health of freedom shall say *Rome* !  
Go home, girl, thou hast nought in me, nor I  
In thee.

*Francesca.* Thy words stand 'twixt my home and me.

*The Monk.* Hence ! Thou shalt pass them.

Freedom's sentinels  
Challenge no feathers.

*Francesca.* I have heard thy fears,  
And fear not. Do the damn'd, my father, shrink  
At voice of angel ? Shall not the small sense  
Of feeblest child sustain the crash of doom ?

*The Monk.* The day is thine.

There was a Greek sage once, who stood in spirit  
Sublime beside his outraged flesh and blood,  
The only calm beholder. He and thou,  
Raw girl ! have come into one heritage ;  
He in grey hairs, weary and wise, as sage ;  
Thou in the flush of unreflecting days,  
As woman. With bowed head I stand before thee,  
Child ! teach me.

*Francesca.* Mock me not, oh father, mock  
Me not. Is it so great a boon to die ?

*The Monk.* Have what thou wilt—do what thou wilt.

*Francesca* (*throwing herself at his feet*). He takes me !  
You Heavens ! he takes me. Master, Teacher, Lord !

*The Monk.* I take thee not.

*Francesca.* Thou canst not drive me from thee !  
I see it all ! He would even crush the fly  
That hums about him. No, my father, no,  
I die not thus.

*The Monk.* I take thee not, brave girl,  
Thy *Country* claims thee. That great Rome, for whom  
Many have *fallen*, but how few have *died*.  
That generous country, which, while other lands  
Build up their bulwarks of their children's dust,  
Of her best sons, in her worst need, asks only  
Apotheosis. Dost thou weep to exchange  
The mortal for the eternal ?

*Francesca.* Teach me how  
To serve her.

*The Monk.* Pay her tithes of the rich love  
That bore thee to her feet. That love which triumph'd  
In victory like his of Underwalden,  
Who buried in his own unconquer'd breast  
Th' opposing spears.

*Francesca.* Father, I am a poor  
Weak ignorant. Thy voice falls on my heart  
Like heavenly music, but alas, I know not  
What words they sing to it in heaven. I pray thee

Give eyes to this blind trouble in my soul,  
Set me some task—nay, do not spare me, master,  
Some task at which thy bravest is not brave—  
Teach me some lesson, in our woman's language,  
Of action and endurance ; I will say it,  
That thou shalt bless thy scholar !

*The Monk.*

Child ! child ! child !

Thou art yet young, and foot of babe can do  
No sacrilege. But curb these proud beliefs,  
There comes a time, when holy bounds o'erstept  
May blast thee. Child, freedom hath sanctuaries,  
Wherein the chaste hands of her best high-priest  
Tremble to serve. Slave ! merry smiling slave !  
Dancing an hour since to the shameful music  
Of thine own chains——

*Francesca.*

Oh father, father, spare me !

Make me her lowest servant——

*The Monk.*

Child, not so.

How should I judge thee ? Enoch was the first,  
But not the last translated. To both worlds  
—The inner and the outer—we come naked.  
The very noblest heart on earth hath oft  
No better lot than *to deserve*. And yet,  
What laurell'd impotent shall show his head  
Beside that uncrown'd giant ?

No, my daughter,

I think thou hast a place beside the throne.  
Behold it near the skies : the golden steps

Of human toil that reach it, and the angels  
Ascending and descending. Wilt thou climb ?

*Francesca.* Oh father !

*The Monk.* Let me breathe thee round the base  
Of the celestial steep. I have a task  
Such as becomes the neophyte of freedom ;  
It shall be thine.

*Francesca.* I clasp thy knees, my father.

*The Monk.* Brave girl, it is a Tyro's task ; a baptism  
That will not drown. The very holiday-work  
Of glory——

*Francesca.* May I do no nobler ?

*The Monk.* Hear it.

Go forth at dawn—as they of old, go forth—  
Carry nor purse, nor scrip, nor shoes, salute  
By the way no man. Through this sad broad land,  
Even from the Alps to the three seas, cry out,  
' Rome is at hand ! '

*Francesca.* Father, no more ?

*The Monk.* No more.

*Francesca.* No word of War, Glory, Shame, Tyrants ?

Nothing

Of this Rome's feature ?

*The Monk.* Did John Baptist know

Whom he foreran ? Daughter, thy chains lie there,  
Not two hours off. No law forbids thee wear them.

*Francesca.* Forgive me, father, I am thine, all  
thine,

But—nay, frown not—what if men tire of this  
Strange cuckoo note?

*The Monk.*                      Do two hearts hear the cuckoo  
With the same beat? Lend me thy lute, dear girl;  
There was a song that in my wanderings  
I heard in other years. A wayward song  
That caught the murmur of the waterfall,  
By which I sang it. But no matter. 'Twill  
Find its way where the brawny words of manhood  
Might be too rude. I would, my poor disciple,  
I had some foot more fit than an arm'd heel  
To tread the dwelling of thy woman's soul.  
And while we commune, daughter,—for alas,  
A patriot militant has no to-morrows—  
Hear this first lesson. It may be remember'd  
When I am not. Stern duties need not speak  
Sternly. He who stood firm before the thunder,  
Worship'd the still small voice. Let the great world  
That bears us—the all-preaching world—instruct thee,  
That teacheth every man, because her precepts  
Are seen, not heard. Oh, worship her. Fear not  
Whilst thou hast open eyes, and ears for all  
The simplest words she saith. Deaf, blind, to these,  
Despair. That worst incurable, perchance  
Some voice may heal hereafter, but none here.  
For before every man, the world of beauty,  
Like a great artist, standeth day and night,  
With patient hand retouching in the heart

God's defaced image. Reverence sights and sounds,  
 Daughter ; be sure the wind among the trees  
 Is whispering wisdom.

Now assist me, lute.

[*The MONK sings—recitativo—touching the lute at intervals.*

There went an incense through the land one night,  
 Through the hush'd holy land, when tired men slept.

[*Interlude of music.*

The haughty sun of June had walk'd, long days,  
 Through the tall pastures which, like mendicants,  
 Hung their sere heads and sued for rain : and he  
 Had thrown them none. And now it was high hay-time.  
 Through the sweet valley all her flowery wealth  
 At once lay low, at once ambrosial blood  
 Cried to the moonlight from a thousand fields.  
 And through the land the incense went that night,  
 Through the hush'd holy land when tired men slept.  
 It fell upon the sage ; who with his lamp  
 Put out the light of heaven. He felt it come  
 Sweetening the musty tomes, like the fair shape  
 Of that one blighted love, which from the past  
 Steals oft among his mouldering thoughts of wisdom.  
 And SHE came with it, borne on airs of youth ;  
 Old days sang round her, old memorial days,  
 She crown'd with tears, they dress'd in flowers, all faded —  
 And the night-fragrance is a harmony  
 All through the old man's soul. Voices of eld,



The home, the church upon the village green,  
Old thoughts that circle like the birds of Even  
Round the grey spire. Soft sweet regrets, like sunset  
Lighting old windows with gleams day had not.  
Ghosts of dead years, whispering old silent names  
Through grass-grown pathways, by halls mouldering now.  
Childhood—the fragrance of forgotten fields ;  
Manhood—the *un*forgotten fields whose fragrance  
Pass'd like a breath ; the time of buttercups,  
The fluttering time of sweet forget-me-nots ;  
The time of passion and the rose—the hay-time  
Of that last summer of hope ! The old man weeps,  
The old man weeps.

His aimless hands the joyless books put by ;  
As one that dreams and fears to wake, the sage  
With vacant eye stifles the trembling taper,  
Lets in the moonlight—and for once is wise.

*[Interlude of music.]*

There went an incense through the midnight land,  
Through the hush'd holy land where tired men slept.  
It fell upon a simple cottage child,  
Laid where the lattice open'd on the sky,  
And she look'd up and said, Those flowers the stars  
Smelt sweet to-night. God rest her ignorance !  
There went an incense through the land one night,  
Through the hush'd holy land when tired men slept ;  
It pass'd above a lonely vale, and fell  
Upon a poet looking out for signs

In heaven and earth, and went into his soul,  
 And like a fluttering bird among sweet strings,  
 Made strange Æolian music wild and dim.

[*Interlude.*

A haggard man, silent beneath the stars,  
 Stood with bare head, a hasty step withdrawn  
 From a low tattered hut, wherefrom the faint  
 Low wail of famine, like a strange night-bird,  
 Cried on the air. He had come forth to give  
 His dying child, his youngest one, repose.  
 'Father,' it said, 'you weep, I cannot die.'  
 There went an incense through the land that night,  
 Through the hush'd holy land when tired men slept;  
 It came upon his soul, and went down deep  
 Deep to his heart, and threw the new-made hay  
 Upon the coals of fire that ember'd there.  
 And by the rising flame came pictures fair,  
 Of old ancestral fields that strangers till,  
 And patrimony that the spoiler reaps.  
 Then falls the flame upon the pallet near,  
 And forward on the canvas of the night,  
 To the wild father's eye, lights up that landscape  
 Of love and health and hope which yesterday  
 The poorest crumbs of the oppressor's feast  
 Might buy. Oh God! how coarse a crust may be  
 The bread of life. He breathes the night-balm in,  
 And breathes it back the red-hot smoke of vengeance!

[*Musical interlude.*

There was a lonely mother and one babe,  
—A moon with one small star in all her heaven—  
Too like the moon, the wan and weary moon,  
In pallor, beauty, all, alas! but change.  
Through six long months of sighs that moon unwaning  
Had risen and set beside the little star.  
And now the little star, whom all the dews  
Of heaven refresh not, westers to its setting,  
Out of the moonlight to be dark for ever.  
O'er the hush'd holy land where tired men sleep,  
There went an incense through the night. It fell  
Upon the mother, and she slept—the babe,  
It smil'd and dream'd of paradise.

Thanks, listener.

I am a sorry minstrel. Had my art  
Been echo to the nature in thy face  
We had heard nobler strains.

*Francesca (sadly).* Alas! there only

Is thy child false.

*The Monk.* Ah! sighing still?

*Francesca.* Dear father,

One more forgiveness! Spirits half cast out  
Tear the possess'd and cry. Indulgent master,  
Complete thy miracle.

*The Monk (severely).* Hath the possess'd  
Faith to be healed?

*Francesca.* I could do all for love,  
Bleed, die for it,—even to the second death—

I could, I would, I *will*—but to give flesh  
For marble ; to be crush'd out of the earth  
By some cold image falling from the clouds !

*The Monk.* Woman, is this a place for earthly passion?

*Francesca.* Not passion, no, not passion. Human light  
In the stern idol's eyes—a heart, a pulse  
To sanctify the embrace—the love that throbs  
Belief—Oh master, master !

*The Monk.* I am patient,  
Strange priestess—how long are these mysteries ?

*Francesca (pauses).* Sir, they are even now ended. I  
say not

Whether the fire be out upon the altar,  
Or if the holy portals are self-closed  
Against unpitying eyes ; but—they are ended.

*The Monk.* Child, I have wrong'd thee.

*Francesca.* Father, say not so.  
They are not wrong'd who have no rights. And what  
Have I before thee ?

*The Monk.* More, my daughter, more  
Than thou or I remembered. Do the stars  
Frown on us ? Yet that cloud of wayward wishes  
The world sent up at vesper-time hangs now  
Fevering the heaven between their eyes and ours.  
Daughter, forget my sins. Fond Hector, arm'd,  
Smiled a paternity too terrible  
Even for a hero's child. The earnest soul  
Drawing a sword is warrior cap-a-pied,

And this voice, strife-strain'd, catches ill to-night  
The pitch of the confessional. Brave girl,  
Canst thou trust twice?

*Francesca.* Do I trust God the less  
For an unanswer'd prayer? Command me, master ;  
'Twas the Promethean madness that essay'd  
To warm a clay heart with celestial fire.  
I am content to serve.

*The Monk.* Nay, tell me all.

*Francesca.* Not so, my father. No, thou shalt not  
cross

This threshold. No, thou shalt not stoop so low  
As to the lintel of a heart like mine !  
Nay, tempt me not. I have received my sorrow,  
And am content. The sin was too delicious  
For feebler retribution. But, oh, once  
To bear what I have borne this hour sufficeth  
For one life.

*The Monk.* Thou poor trembling child, be calm.  
Truth, partial to her sex, made woman free  
Even of her inmost cell ; but man walks round  
The outer courts, and by the auspices  
And divinations of the augur reason,  
Knows her chaste will, her voice, and habit better  
—With a sure science, more abstract and pure—  
Than ye who run by instinct to her knee.  
Answer me, child, perchance——

*Francesca.* Nay, father, nay,

I am not worthy of thine auguries.  
I will confess. I fear'd—forgive me, father,  
I did fear that as there *have* been who flew  
Wild with their own inevitable shadow ;  
The dark monotony from day to day,  
Of words that had no image in my brain,—  
Great everpresent names that stand for nothing  
In heaven or earth, sounds, awful, awful sounds,  
For shapes I cannot see, haunting my ears,  
Might drive me mad. Is not a whisper, father,  
Fearful at night? Are there not some, my father,  
Who have been doom'd to drag a skeleton  
Rattling behind them? Oh, you heavens, you heavens,  
I shall go mad.

*The Monk (musingly).* Ay, child, those rank weeds,  
words,

Exhaust the soul.

*Francesca.* A little love, dear master,  
It seem'd to me if I could know and love  
—Though afar off—this Rome of which thou speakest,  
It would make life of death.

*The Monk.* Yes, thou must love her,  
There must be fire from heaven or hell to burn  
Offerings that burnt were incense, but neglected  
Pollute the winds. Thou must love Rome, my daughter,  
As she loves thee.

*Francesca.* Oh, can she love me? How,  
Oh, tell me how the mortal can win looks

From the eternal? How the daughters of men  
Drew angels down? Alas, thou jestest, father,  
She—the espoused of ages—how shall I  
Woo *her*?

*The Monk.* Even as thou makest other loves.  
Watch her and wait upon her ; let her share  
Thy morn and eve, and in the sleep of noon  
Dream of her. Have no shame to see her by  
Thy bed at night, and to undress thine heart  
In her sad gaze.

In the dull ways of men  
Sitting and walking lonely, let *her* image  
Be thy attendant spirit, and interpret  
All things into her language. Haply passing  
A ruin'd garden, all of broken statues,  
Temples o'er-turn'd, sweet haunts of love and pleasance  
Defiled and trodden in the outraged earth,  
And blossoms like the noon for radiance, trampled  
By foul insulting feet : while over all  
The appealing music of wronged solitudes,  
Of shades deflower'd and sanctities profaned,  
Hangs like a dewy exhalation—then  
Look up and say, My country !

Wandering through  
The lovely ruin, if thy step should strike  
On some fair column ; prone and moss-interr'd,  
Fit for a god to stand on ; one of those  
That found amid a desert's sands alone,

Should of the wealth of its one witness give  
Another tome to history—be reverent,  
Tread as thy feet were among graves—and say,  
My country !

Or, oh prince's daughter, if  
In some proud street, leaning 'twixt night and day  
From out thy palace balcony to meet  
The breeze—that tempted by the hush of eve,  
Steals from the fields about a city's shows,  
And like a lost child, scared with wondering, flies  
From side to side in touching trust and terror,  
Crying sweet country names and dropping flowers—  
Leaning to meet that breeze, and looking down  
To the so silent city, if below  
With dress disorder'd and dishevell'd passions  
Streaming from desperate eyes that flash and flicker  
Like corpse-lights, (eyes that once were known on high,  
Morning and night, as welcome there as thine,)  
And brow of trodden snow, and form majestic  
That might have walk'd unchallenged through the skies,  
And reckless feet, fitful with wine and woe,  
And songs of revel that fall dead about  
Her ruin'd beauty—sadder than a wail—  
(As if the sweet maternal eve for pity  
Took out the joy, and, with a blush of twilight,  
Uncrown'd the Bacchanal)—some outraged sister  
Passeth, be patient, think upon yon heaven,  
Where angels hail the Magdalen, look down  
Upon that life in death and say—My country !



## SCENE III.

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF MILAN, DURING A POPULAR  
ÉMEUTE.

*A great band of Insurgents, armed, and singing, pass over.  
The Monk stands near.*

*All (chanting as they march).* Who would drone on in  
a dull world like this ?

Heaven costs no more than a pang and a sigh ;  
Dash off the fetters that bind us from bliss,  
Fair fall the freeman who foremost shall die !  
Death's a siesta, lads, take it who can !  
Wave the proud banners that wave for Milan !

Chanted in song, and remember'd in story,  
Sunk but to rise—like the sun in the wave—  
Grandly the fallen shall sleep in his glory,  
Proudly his country thall weep at his grave,  
And hallow like relics each clod where there ran  
The blood of that hero who died for Milan !

Holy his name shall be, blest by the brave and free,  
Kept like a saint's day the hour when he died !  
The mother that bore him, the maid that bends o'er him,  
Shall weep, but the tears shall be rich tears of pride.

Shout, brothers, shout for the first falling man,  
Shout for the gallant that dies for Milan !

Long, long years hence by the home of his truth,  
His fate, beaming eyes yet unborn shall bedew,  
Beloved of the lovely, while beauty and youth  
Shall give their best sighs to the brave and the true !  
On, spears ! spur, cavaliers ! Victory our van,  
Fame sounds the trumpet that sounds for Milan !

[ *They pass ; the MONK steps forth, and stopping some  
of the rearguard, speaks.*

*The Monk.* Would you know  
The path of that false tyrant, who enslaved  
Your fetter'd land : and, with her outraged beauties  
Beaming upon you, made ye glad to die ?

*Soldier.* Ay, holy father.

*The Monk.* Would you know the spot  
Where, in the shoutings of his maniac triumph,  
He calls his blood-hounds round his gory hands,  
And cheers them on the prey ?

*Soldier.* Since the noon-sun  
Shone on the flying Austrians, we have track'd them,  
And burn to sup as we have dined. Speak on.

*The Monk.* If I could count you man by man, and  
horse

By horse, and bayonet by bayonet,  
And point the very lurking place—

*Soldier.*

Nay, speak !

The sun sinks, and Milan herself goes down  
With to-night's dews. Speak, speak, good father.

*The Monk.*

Fools !

What ! do you take me for some Austrian trull,  
At service of the first camp follower  
That sues her? Do you think I make my council  
Of way-side dangles? Dost betray me, fellow?  
Thou pale-faced German knave, if thou art aught  
That man may name unblushing, hence and bring me  
The leaders of this crew.

*One Soldier to another.* Go fetch the captain

Of the tenth troop.

*The Monk.* Friend, fetch ten thousand captains,

And march them here to march them back again ;  
What ! dost thou think Milan's great doom is meat  
For mouths like thine? Hence, bring your general,  
And bid him—as he values absolution  
For all that army of unshriven souls  
That hope to make their beds in Paradise—  
Appear with such attendance as befits  
The majesty of freedom. Hence, and tell him  
I can show where Milan's great foe is flagrant,  
And swear upon my priestly faith, this night  
He shall behold him !

[*Exit a soldier.*

*Enter General and crowd of troops.*

*General.*

Sir, and reverend father,

Thou wilt forgive me if I am deceived—

A straggler of our army brought—but now—  
An imminent commandment. Was it thine?

*The Monk.* Mine.

*General.* We do trust thou hast not wrong'd us,  
father :

Each passing moment that goes by us now  
Is full of lives.

*The Monk.* I have not wrong'd you. Hear me.

You say you combat for your country—mine,  
Yours, every man's in whom the proud high blood  
Of the old time still struggles with the present,  
And throbs and blushes at degenerate days :  
The country of the Cæsars, and the saints,  
And, better still, the land of stirring deeds,  
Done by rude hands, and heads as yet uncrown'd  
In earth or heaven ; the lady of the kingdoms—  
The soil on which the gods came down, confounding  
Their heaven with ours ;—restore me if I wander  
From your own words—you strike for this dear country ?

*All.* Die for it !

*The Monk.* And the tide that flowed from those  
Old Roman veins like empire, so that where  
The Roman bled he ruled—the blood that soak'd  
His sovereignty into the land he fell on,  
Flows in you, and you feel it ?

*General.* Reverend father,  
Time hastes—the news—thine oath—we must hence—

*The Monk.* Peace !

Wilt thou direct my gifts, rebellious child?

[*Turning to the Crowd.*

Say, will you hear me? Will you know the spot  
Where the foe lurks I swore to show you?

*All.*

Speak!

*The Monk.* You feel the pulses of the Roman blood,  
You think the masters of the world begot  
Kings, and not slaves—you come forth with the same  
Looks, passions, sinews, souls and giant hearts,  
Which in your sires stood round your ancient heroes,  
And lifted them to glory on their shields,  
—Those heroes worshipp'd by the startled earth,  
Who seeing them above you, call'd them gods—  
You know the same grand instinct of vast empire,  
You stand upon the same Italian ground,  
You stand on that same ground, the same proud people,  
And the inheritors of ancient worlds,  
Shout for Milan! What! will you pay your lives  
To buy a freedom girt by fewer acres  
Than your old consuls would have thrown away  
Upon a birth-day gift? What, has this land,  
This Italy, grown smaller, and lacks ground  
For such a temple as it once upbore?  
Or in your base hearts, shrunk with shameful days,  
Is there no space to build a Roman glory?  
Go to! you feeble sons of feeble days,  
You that would totter with the very name  
By which men call'd your sires! Go to, you pignies,

Who have no more resource in your dwarf nerves,  
To know the squalor of your futile limbs,  
Than you have sight or soul or sense to compass  
The awful stature of a Roman people !  
Why do I speak of glory ? Italy,  
This Italy, which in its length and breadth  
Scarce served your fathers for a throne to sit on,  
Confounds their children with its vast horizon !  
And the posterity of those who counted  
Conquests by continents, weigh'd out dominion  
By hemispheres, and cast a score of kingdoms  
As dust to balance the unequal scale,  
Wage comfit combats at a carnival !  
Coin fatherlands and farthings ; and step out  
Their mimic royalties, and make toy princes  
Glorious in gilt and gingerbread for kings  
At school to play with. Husbandmen in crowns,  
Great in the lordship of a Roman field,  
Affect the despot, and to trembling townships  
Nod sovereignty ; with equal hand create  
A constitution, country, and court-cook,  
Will loyalties, and point with awful finger  
Which hedge and ditch shall bound a patriotism !  
While Romans smile, and sons of Cæsar farm  
Well pleas'd what Cæsar would have deem'd too strait  
To breed his wild boars for a hunting day,  
And call it Empire !

*Enter fresh crowds of Soldiers shouting.*

*Soldiers.* Long live the republic !

Long live the commonwealth of Lombardy !

*The Monk.* Long live eternal Rome ! long live that  
Rome

Which is not dead but sleepeth ! long live Rome !

Men, this is the great year of resurrection !

All who are in their graves shall hear his voice,

And come forth ! That which twenty centuries hence

Lay down a hero, shall rise up a god !

Shout, countrymen ! and wake the graves ; shout, ROME !

REPUBLIC ! RISE !

*Many voices.* Down with him, down with him. Viva  
Milano !

*General.* A hearing, comrades !

*Many.* Peace ! the General speaks !

*General.* Priest, at thy peril——

*Many.* At thy peril, priest !

*General.* Priest, at thy peril, cease these timeless  
babblings,

Respect thine oath and life. Show us the foe !

*Soldiers.* The foe, the foe, the foe——

*The Monk.* Each silent man,

When I cry Rome ! Each false, base-blooded shouter,

When you cry Lombardy !

*Soldiers.* Base-blooded ! false !

Base-blooded ! false ! give him a ball in the mouth !

Milan ! Milan ! up muskets !

*General.* Shoulder arms !

*The Monk.* Each self-judged helot, pleased to toil, a  
Goth,

When he might rule, a Roman ! Rome ? Rome ?  
Rome ?

Bah ! by what witchcraft should you know that name,  
You Tuscans, Luccans, Florentines, Sardinians,  
Parmans, Placentians, Paduans and—slaves ?

*Soldiers.* Spear him—a pike, a pike !

*Some.* Hear the priest !

*Others (with great uproar).* Stone him,  
Stone him——

*The Monk.* I am a Roman. Let some Vandal  
Cast the first stone.

#### SCENE IV.

#### MOONLIGHT.

FRANCESCA *alone, musing, sitting on a bank beneath trees.*

CECCO, *a friend, enters unperceived, at the close of her soliloquy.*

*Francesca.* I will but live in twilight,

I will seek out some lone Egerian grove,  
Where sacred and o'er-greeting branches shed



Perpetual eve, and all the cheated hours  
Sing vespers. And beside a sullen stream,  
Ice-cold at noon, my shadowy self shall sit,  
Crown'd with dull wreaths of middle-tinted flowers ;  
With sympathetic roses, wan with weeping  
For April sorrows ; frighten'd harebells, pale  
With thunder ; last, half-scented honeysuckle,  
That like an ill-starr'd child hides its brown head  
Through the long summer banquet, but steals late  
To wander through the fragments of the feast,  
And glad us with remember'd words that fell  
From guests of beauty ; sunburnt lilies, grey  
Wind-whispering ilex, and whatever leaves  
And changeling blossoms Flora, half-asleep,  
Makes paler than the sun and warmer than the moon !  
Was ever slave so dark and cold as I ?  
Ah cruel, cruel night ! the very stars  
Put me to shame ! I spur my soul all day  
With thought of tyrants, woes and chains, and curse  
As oft my pallid and ill-blooded nature,  
That will not rage. Oh for some separate slave  
To pity every vassal by ! Some tyrant  
By whom I might set down of all oppressors  
That they are thus and thus ! Oh that some hand,  
Oh that some one hand, faint and fetter-wrung,  
Would thrust its clanking wrongs before my eyes,  
And I could bleed to break them !

And thou ! country !

Thou stern and awful god, of which my reason  
Preaches infallibly, but which no sense  
Bears witness to—I would thou hadst a shape.  
It might be dwarf, deform'd, maim'd,—anything,  
So it was thine ; and it should stand to me  
For beauty. And my soul should wait on it,  
And I would train my fancies all about it,  
Till growing to its fashion, and most nurtured  
With smiles and tears they strengthen'd into love.  
But—Santo—this indefinite dim presence  
I cannot worship. O thou dear apostle,  
Oh what a patriot could Francesca be  
If *thou* wert Rome ! Oh what a fond disciple  
Should his tongue have whose only eloquence  
Was praise of thee ! To what a pile of vengeance  
One look of retribution in thine eye  
Were torch enough ! Be still, my heart, be still !  
Ah wilful, wilful heart, dost thou refuse ?  
Nay, be appeased—I bid thee silence, lest  
Consenting cheeks attest how well thou sayest !  
Too late, too late. Nay, do you crave, you blushes,  
Escort of spoken passion, to interpret  
Your beauties to the moon, which, pale with love  
And watching for the never-coming night,  
Mistakes them for some rosy cloud of dawn,  
And ends her vigil ? Heart, have all thy will !  
Santo, I love thee ! love thee ! love thee ! love thee !  
Santo, I love thee ! oh, thou wild word love !

Thou bird broke loose ! I could say on and on,  
And feel existence but to speak and hear.  
Santo, I love thee ! Hear ! Francesca loves thee,  
Santo, I love thee ! oh, my heart, my heart,  
My heart, thou Arab mad with desert-thirst,  
In sight of water !—think upon the sands,  
Thou leaping trembling lunatic, and keep  
Some strength to reach the well.

*Cecco (approaching).*

What voice is this,

That calls upon a traitor ?

*Francesca.*

Thou base stranger,

Thou coward spy ! one that will call on him,  
Though her tongue pay the forfeit ! Yes, vile Austrian,  
I call him, I,—I, who to save my soul  
Would scorn to call upon the milk-eyed saints  
That look from Heaven upon your German deeds  
And do not blight you !

*Cecco (drawing near).* Sister Roman ! well

And timely met.

*Francesca.*

Cecco ! thy lips are traitors,

And mouth to German fashions. I believed  
The hour I sometime pray'd for, come already,  
And thee an Austrian spy.

*Cecco.*

Forgive me that

I show'd my passport at a friendly gate,  
Despair is a poor courtier. I may waste  
Only so many words as may demand  
Assistance, if thou hast it, and if not

God-speed ! It wants but three short hours of dawn,  
I swore to Santo he should have a Bible  
Two hours before his time.

*Francesca.* It wants three hours  
Of dawn—thou sworeest he should have a Bible  
Two hours before his time—Cecco—

*Cecco.* Be brief,  
For pity. Is there any bold man near  
Who has and who dare lend ?

*Francesca.* Be brief, for pity—  
Thou sworeest he should have — you heavens, you  
heavens,  
What do your clouds hide ?

*Cecco.* I must leave thee.

*Francesca (to Cecco, who essays to go: she shows a  
poniard).* Cecco,

Tell me ; tell all. Ah Cecco—nay, look here  
In the moonlight—saints ! I can use it !

*Cecco.* Strange,  
Wild girl, how ? know'st thou not as well as I  
Vittorio preaching to some Milanese  
Who would be patriots if they knew but how,  
Spent precious hours in which the German foe  
Slipt from the snare ? whereat brave Roderigo—  
A gallant sword—the greatest libertine  
In Milan—seized him. In the castle dungeon  
He lies since noon, and with the coming dawn  
Dies.

*Francesca.* Dies, dies,—who dies?—pray you, friend,  
say on ;

I am not wont to wander.

*[She sinks gently to the earth. Cecco reclines her on  
a bank and hastens on. After awhile Francesca  
sits up.]*

This is well !

That last waltz spent me. Let me see, what gallant  
Danced young Francesca down ? Nay, he'll boast rarely !  
Yet it seems, long ago—long, long ago.  
Such dreamless sleep ! Thou melancholy moon,  
What ! have I caught my death-damp of the dews ?  
Death,—death,—ah !

*[A long pause ; she sits with her head in her hands.]*  
A gallant sword—the greatest libertine  
In Milan ?—yes, yes,—Roderigo,—yes—

*[Another long pause.]*

He lies since noon—ay, in the castle dungeon,  
And with the dawn—No, no, thou pitiless sun !  
Thou durst not rise ! Oh sea, if thou hast waves,  
Quench him !

*[Another long pause.]*

A gallant sword—the greatest libertine  
In Milan.—Ah—the greatest libertine ?  
Who says I am not fair ? Ye gods ! I curse you :  
Why do ye tempt me ?

*[A very long pause. Cecco passes in returning.]*

It is over, Cecco ;

Cecco, I tell thee it is past, is past.

Santo is free. Look thou that horses wait  
Near the east gate by sunrise. At the walls  
My mission ends. Doubt not. I am not mad,  
I hope I am not. Yet one hour of frenzy  
Would take me from this hell to heaven. But, Cecco,  
I would not buy oblivion, at this moment,  
With a right hand that shakes.

I tell thee, haste !

Gaze not on me ! with all the fiends about me,  
I have not sat an hour stock-still for nought ;  
Begone ! [Exit CECCO.]

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## SCENE V.

### THE COMMON ROOM OF AN INN.

*Enter, by different doors, a number of Students and  
Burghers, shouting to each other as they meet and greet.*

*Each and all.* The news ? The news ? The news ?  
The news ? The news ?

*One.* I've a good tale.

*Another.* I better.

*Another.* I the best.

*Another.* Mine caps superlative.

*Another.* Hurrah ! and mine's

A feather in the cap.

*Another.* Boys! mine's the bird  
That grew the feather.  
*The first.* Hear me for my age.  
*The second.* Me for my honesty.  
*The third.* Me for my beauty!  
*The fourth.* Me for my wit.  
*The fifth.* Me for my eloquence.  
*The sixth.* Me  
For all these.  
*Another.* Me for none of them, since naked  
Beggars are best arm'd.

*Enter GIACCO.*

*Giacco.* Halloo!  
*All.* Giacco! Giacco!  
Brave Giacco!  
*Giacco.* Here's a tale, my comrades!  
*All.* Hear him!  
*One.* Hurrah! trust Giacco for a pretty wench  
And a good story.  
*Another.* Nay, for certain, Milan  
Has no such tell-tale.  
*Another.* Lads! a cup all round,  
Giacco does best!  
*One (aside).* Pray Mary! he knows mine;  
Every good saint! it must be mine.  
*Some.* Now, Giacco!  
*Others.* Attend! attend! attend!

*Others.* Silence! Now, Giacco!

*Giacco.* There came a man——

*One.* Ay, 'tis so.

*Another.* Very true——

So I say.

*Another.* Hear him!

*Another.* Ay, ay, go on, Giacco!

*Giacco.* There came a man dress'd like a priest——

*One.* The same.

*Another.* Yes, 'twas a priest.

*Another.* Said I not well? ah, ah!

Trust Giacco for a tale.

*Giacco.* A thin pale man——

*One.* A pale thin man.

*Another.* Yes, pale and spare, I say so.

*Another.* Spare, very spare.

*Another.* The same! the dogs snarl'd  
at him

As he were bones.

*Giacco.* He pass'd down Duomo Street——

*One.* The very street!

*Another.* Yes, yes, the place, the place,

The very place—all but the name—good Giacco!

*Another.* Giacco forgets a little—Yes, yes, Giacco——

(*Aside*). My life on it, he means the place I say!

*Giacco.* Walking down slowly——

*One.* Yes, yes, walking slowly.

*Another.* Right, Giacco!



*Another.* Well done, Giacco.

*Another.* Ay, I say so ;

Oh, 'tis my story !

*Giacco.* Walking down he enters

A merchant's office hard upon the quay——

*One.* Wrong, Giacco !

*Another.* Giacco, thou'rt beside thyself !

*Another.* Blind Giacco !

*Another.* Saints and angels !

*Giacco.* Why, I saw him——

*Another.* Giacco, thou liest !

*Another.* Turn him out !

*Another.* Nay ! 'tis flagrant !

*All.* Turn him out !

*Enter a Village Schoolmaster.*

*Doctor Scio.* Men !

*Some.* Room for the Doctor Scio !<sup>1</sup>

*Others.* Chair for the master, there !

*Others.* Hats off ! the Doctor !

*All.* Room for the Doctor ! Let the Doctor judge !

Take him aside, Giovanni. Tell him all !

Tell him, Giovanni !

*Scio* (*pompously*). Children agapete !

Well-beloved children ! trouble not Giovanni !

For as of old the mild mellifluous beams

Of Cytherea on the Prince of Troy

<sup>1</sup> The reader need not be reminded that *Scio* is but one syllable in Italian.

Stole through the broken pane,—as to Endymion,  
Through the crack'd casement of consenting cave,  
The star-train'd goddess came; so from these wide  
And vomitorial windows, belch'd your tumult  
To me transgressing.

*Some.* Hear him!

*Others.* Well done, Scio!

Hear him!

*One.* Oh learning! what a treasure thou art!

*Others.* Hurrah! Speak, Doctor, speak!

*Scio.* The labourer

Is worthy of his hire. Friends, what is hire?

*All.* Wages!

*Scio.* And when, Sirs, does the fatigate  
Pellosseous, son of sudorific toil,  
Receive his wage? Is it not, friends, the eve,  
The sweet stipendiary eve of Saturn's day?

*Burghers (to each other).* Didst hear the like? What  
'tis to be a scholar!

Scio has my boy—for one.

*Scio.* And shall we, friends,  
Shall we degrade the majesty of Learning  
Which I—which I—her infinitesimal  
Exiguous representative——

*Some.* Bravo,  
Well said!

*Scio.* Which I—her representative  
Exiguous but unworthy——

*Some.* No, no, Scio,  
No, not unworthy.

*Others.* Don't be modest, Scio ;  
Unworthy ! bah !——

*Others.* Give us the other words—  
Go on, Scio, 'infinite'——

*Scio.* I say, my friends,  
Shall I, the representative of Learning,  
Work first and be paid after, like the plodder  
In yonder field ? My friends, there was a thing,  
A tool, an article, friends, a utensil  
Known to our fathers by the sacred names  
Poculum, cantharus, carchesium, scyphus,  
Cymbium, culullus, cyathus, amystis,  
Scaphium, batiola, and now by us  
Their children, Sirs, albeit unworthy, call'd  
*A cup.*

*All.* A cup, a cup, a cup of wine !  
Well done, old Scio ! hurrah ! a cup of wine  
Here for the doctor, oh ! a cup of wine.

*Enter a Stranger, who stands aside. A Burgher bows to  
him and speaks.*

*Burgher (to Stranger).* A stranger ?

*Stranger.* Yes.

*Burgher.* You come in good time, Sir ;  
Sir, you're a happy man, I give you joy, Sir ;  
Sir, these are times !—I take it, Sir, few men  
Can gainsay that, Sir,—these are times, Sir, eh ?

*Stranger.* Sir, these are times.

*Burgher* (*pointing to Scio*). You take me, Sir, I see.  
Now, Sir, behold that man. I say, Sir, mark him;  
Now, Sir, you see a man, a man, Sir.

*Stranger.* Sir,  
I see a man.

*Burgher.* Just my idea, Sir,—Sir,  
I crave your further knowledge, we are friends—  
Saints! how a patriot's eye—between ourselves—Sir,  
A patriot's eye finds out the man of the age.

*Stranger.* There is a nameless something—

*Burgher.* Sir, you have it ;  
My own idea, Sir, from a boy—a something  
Indisputably something. Yes, a something  
As one might say—to speak more plainly—something,  
A something, Sir,—something in the set of the ear——

*Many shout.* Scio—Doctor Scio—Silence! The  
Doctor! Silence!

*Enter LELIO, a Student.*

*Lelio.* Here's news, friends!

*Many.* How now, Lelio?

*Lelio.* Which man here  
Tells the best tale?

*Many.* I. I. I. I. I. I.

*Lelio.* Nay, everybody! Write me up a nonsuch!  
I can beat everybody. Heroes can  
No more.

*All.* A challenge, lads; what ho! a ring,

A ring, a ring, a ring! Champion, step out!

A ring! a ring!

*A Student.* Go call thy daughter, hostess,  
Here's that will make her honest.

*Hostess.* Sir?

*Student.* A ring.

*All.* Now, Lelio, now, each man that beats thee wins  
His bottle.

*Lelio.* Done. You know the fair Francesca,  
Count Grassi's daughter?

*All.* Are we Milanese?

*Lelio.* Well——

*One.* Well?

*Another.* Well! Nay, if she's well, Lelio,  
'Tis no such story!

*Lelio.* Which man has not seen  
Young Roderigo Rossi?

*All.* Or the sun,  
The moon—a star or two—the Duomo—well?

*Lelio.* Young Rossi and a priest fell out last night.

*Several.* A priest—a priest—a priest——

*One.* My life upon it  
The fellow knows my story.

*Lelio.* On this quarrel,  
Our gallant Cavaliero dooms his man  
To die at day-break.

*Many.* By the holy pope,  
A foul deed—nay, a foul deed.

*One (aside).* Ne'ertheless,  
By Heavens I'm glad on't. This is not my story.  
My priest was a true patriot.

*Lelio.* At midnight——  
(Count Grassi's child hath a fair face)

*Several.* At midnight,  
Count Grassi's child hath a fair face ! Fie, Lelio ;  
Why what a traitor art thou !

*Lelio.* Attend, I say !  
Bold Rossi's lewdness is a proverb——

*Several (pour badiner).* Hold,  
Lelio, for pity—there are bachelors here—  
We are not all companions in misfortune !  
For pity, Lelio !

*Lelio.* You that shout for pity,  
If you be Pity's followers, do her now  
Your best allegiance. Good friends, I, her quæstor,  
Claim tribute from you. A few tears will pay it.  
Listen. 'The young Francesca, at the price  
Of her fair body, bought the captive's life ;  
The priest is free. Do not cry out. Young Rossi  
Craved instant payment. She in her superb  
High loveliness, whose every look enhanced  
The ransom, sent him from her, glad to grant  
Another maiden hour for prayer and tears.  
Francesca wore a poniard. She is now  
A maid for ever.

*Hostess (to one standing by).* How is that, Sir ?

*Student (aside).*

Hush !

Dead !

*Several.* 'Tis a woful story. Poor Francesca !

*Scio.* Requiem æternam dona eis Domine !

*Several.* Amen. Amen.

*Hostess (aside).* Dead ! 'tis against my conscience ;

Dead ! and the Signor Rossi ! why a comelier

Walks not Milan. Dead—nay, I couldn't have done it !

Well, well, there be hard hearts that slight their blessings.

So comely a young man ! The saints preserve me !

Nay, 'twas a sinful blindness.

*Lelio.*

How now, hostess,

Some wine, some wine ; wine, wine.

*Several.*

More wine ; now, Lelio,

Who was this monk ?—

*Lelio.*

Fill up your glasses, comrades,

Sorrow is thirsty fellowship—eh, hostess ?

*Several.* Lelio—now, Lelio—name, name, name !

*Others.*

This priest,

This lady-killing priest !

*Lelio (to one).*

Hast thou forgotten

A dance with Ginevrà at eve ? A priest—

*One* The same ?

*Lelio.*

The same.

*One.*

Vittorio Santo ? speak !

*Another.* Santo ?

*Another.*

Vittorio Santo ?

*Lelio.*

What ! Vincenzo

Barnabà ! Ah Tomaseo ! are ye also

Of Nazareth? Well done ! tell you my story.

*Many.* Lelio—hear Lelio—

*Others.*

Hear !

*Lelio.*

It was this Santo.

Dost thou mind, Giacchimo, how, deftly feigning  
 Sorrows about a grave, he won our ears  
 And prick'd us on to virtue with the sword  
 Of our own sympathies? With such shrewd warfare—  
 Proteus for transformation—Briareus  
 For head and hands—this strange campaigner carries  
 The fire and sword of his hot argument  
 From cot to palace, plain to mountain-top.  
 The merchant at his ledger, lifting eyes  
 Bloodshot with lack of sleep—for last night blew—  
 Sees him beside his desk at close of day,  
 And thinks the lamp burns dimmer, and believes  
 The untold loss already. The pale priest,  
 Opening his silent lips with such an omen  
 That the faint listener starts, relates how some  
 Great galleon, gallant on her homeward way—  
 A floating Ind, mann'd by the pride of Europe—  
 Storm'd by a scallop fleet of naked pirates,  
 Bestrews their savage shores, and makes each rock  
 Arabia. With keen eyes catching the throes  
 Of his now gasping auditor, the tale  
 Our stern tormentor fashions so astutely,  
 That each new fear, enduing, strains it to  
 Its several shape. Watching each rising hope,



He stings it mad with some especial horror,  
And by a track of anguish feels his way  
Straight to his victim's heart. In that worst moment  
The messenger of doom assumes the angel !  
Looks that evangelise, eyes that beam light  
Into the soul, till every dead hope glitters  
Like a crown'd corpse ; a moment's shining silence,  
Slow placid words that hurry to a torrent ;  
Then the gulf-stream of passion ! high command,  
Entreaty, reason, adjuration ;—all  
The martial attitudes of a grand soul.  
The lavish wealth of infinite resource !  
Diamonds thrown broad-cast for denaros !—ay,  
That Argosy he spoke of, scatter'd on  
The maddest waves of rushing rapid, surging  
Headlong through foaming straits, above, below,  
Tossing the wealth of kingdoms, hurtles not  
With such tumultuous riches as the flood  
Of his strange eloquence. And then the scared  
And half-drown'd trader—lifting his blind thought  
Above the waters, that with sudden ebb  
Left him in silence—finds he is alone.  
Of all the golden wreck, his struggling soul  
Holds fast but this—*Rome* is that glorious galleon,  
Now stranded and forlorn : her freight of honours  
Strew'd up and down the world, purpling strange snows  
And loading cold barbaric winds with incense.  
That night, at home, the merchant tells his story,

Wherewith, still later, madam at her glass  
Stirs sleepy Abigail. Sweet Abigail,  
Still nearer midnight, garrulously coy,  
'Twixt amorous Corydon and her warm charms,  
Weaves the gauze meshes of the thrice-told tale.  
Next morn on 'Change betimes the story stalks  
By blind deaf faces, as a spirit might walk  
Among the wooden gods of the sea-kings.  
The hour of contract over,—the fierce edge  
Of morning appetite now turn'd with gold—  
Nature appeased, and the commercial soul  
In jolly after-dinner complaisance  
Relax'd and smiling,—prosperous ears attend  
The merchant never weary of recounting.  
'Insured, Sir?' 'I fear not.' 'Heyday, heyday,  
A sorry venture!' Then the angry hum  
Subsiding, all surround the man of facts.  
Sage heads shook much that day. Municipal  
Grave brains plagued with strange phantoms, never yet  
Free of the city, in the sacred gloom  
Of shades official, ached, and retched, and heaved,  
To throw the incivic innovation off:  
And in the pangs of labour crying out,  
Betrayed the parentage. So this strange priest  
Made his foes preach for him, till all Leghorn  
Hung on his lips. With bold incessant presence  
Whereto no shrine is sacred, no stern fastness  
Strong, no offended majesty majestic,

No sinner excommunicate, no saint  
Holy, no Dives rich, no Lazarus poor,  
No human heart unworthy—this strange man—  
This cowl'd evangelist, that *Monk* is not—  
(For he preach'd yesterday that not a bare  
Untempled spot, unblest, unconsecrate  
On earth, but is sufficient sanctuary  
For the best hour of the best life ;—no cloud  
In any heaven so dark that a good prayer  
Cannot ascend,)—this polyglot of prophets,  
Roams like a manifold infection, shedding  
Through the sick souls of men the strange disease  
Of his own spirit. Not an art or calling  
Wherein men work'd in peace, but at his touch  
Spreads the indefinite sorrow. In the field  
Halting the team of early husbandman,  
He chides him for the German weeds that choke  
The Roman crop of glory ; bids him seek  
The plough of Cincinnatus, and bring forth  
Into the sunshine of the age, that soil,  
That old heroic soil whence patriots spring !  
Hard by the wondering swain, sequester'd close  
By summer elms and vines, the village forge  
From cheerful anvil all the long day rings  
The chimes of labour. Thence at winter night  
Shines to the distant villager the star  
Of home ; to which the homeless wayfarer,  
Trudging with fainting steps the storm-vex'd moor,

Turns hopeless eyes, as to the vestal fire  
 Of sweet impossible peace. Thereby the priest  
 Pausing, the sturdy smith suspends his stroke  
 Before the reverend stranger ; who accepts  
 The homage with such liquidating grace  
 That the stunn'd peasant, unabsolved of duty,  
 Renews obeisance. Then the pale intruder  
 Striding some stool, with hand upon the bellows,  
 Moves the slack fire, and bids the work go on :  
 Cursing the slave who stoops for prince or priest  
 The dignity of toil. To the rough music  
 Setting strong words, he sends with easy skill  
 Wrongs, hopes, and duties trooping through the soul  
 Of the stout smith, and there on his own smithy  
 Blows the rough iron of his heart red-hot.  
 Seizing the magic time, with sudden hand  
 He stamps him to the quick ;—‘ Patriot ! the hour  
 Is come to beat our ploughshares into swords,  
 Our pruning hooks to spears !’ The brand driven home,  
 The apostle vanishes, lest weaker words  
 Efface the sign.

*A Student.* Lelio ! dost thou remember——

*Lelio.* I know thy thought,—the shopman of the  
 vale——

*Student.* Nay, Lelio——

*Lelio.* Now I have it—the stout Tuscan,  
 With wain o’erloaded——

*Student.* Not he——

*Lelio.* Ah ! the maid  
Who sang in German——

*Student.* No——

*Lelio.* Stay ! she who wore  
The cameo victory——

*Student.* Now hear me, *Lelio*.  
When he saw——

*Lelio.* What ! when meeting country boys  
With laurel and acanthus——

*Student.* No ! the saints !

*Lelio.* True, true, the tale of the parch'd field beside  
The aqueduct——

*Student.* Wrong ! Holy Mary !

*Lelio.* Well——

*Student.* Peace, I say, *Lelio* !

*Lelio.* Sometime hence, dear friend ;  
I am not weary. 'Twas of the round tower  
Of Vesta, whence the epicurean Time,  
Fresh from the feasts of Rome, took but the heart,  
And all is there but the celestial flame  
That consecrated all——

*Student.* Have thine own way,  
But were I *Lelio*——

*Lelio.* Tut, I know thy story.  
'Twas of the eve when, meeting by the way  
An ancient pedagogue, whose thin, time-worn,  
And reverend features (whereabout grey locks  
Hung lank as weeds), great names went in and out,

Mournfully populous, like olden heroes  
Haunting some Roman ruin ; our fierce patriot——  
Say I not well ?

*Student.*           Hast thou in truth forgotten  
The village priest ?

*Lelio.*               The priest ? *our* priest says little  
To alb and stole—whether from shrewd self-knowledge,  
Or feeling that all tyrants are familiars,  
And that those proud prætorians who subverted  
The commonwealth of God would lord it over  
An earthly heritage—therefore, good comrade,  
Owe us thy tale.

*Student.*           One day——

*Lelio.*               One moment first,  
('One day ' can spare it). I shall ne'er forget,  
When falling in upon a lone wild road  
With a fat monk, our patriot, for sheer lack  
Of occupation, challenges a war  
Of words. Good saints ! a firework by a fountain !  
A schoolboy's freak played out with cannon balls  
And rotten apples ! As our Santo's lightnings  
Through the thick haze of t'other's sanctity  
Singed brow and beard, heavens ! how the reverend eyes  
(Wrestling with wrinkles and siesta-time)  
Did struggle to a stare. And the good man,  
Heaving his flesh, buzzed like a portly fly  
In thundery weather ; our relentless Santo  
At parting gives him for to-morrow's text

The whip of knotted cords that cleansed the temple.  
'Preach, priest,' he cries, 'that from these sacred bounds,  
This outraged temple ITALY, each Roman  
Scourge those that sell the sacrilegious doves  
Of perjured peace. O'erturn, o'erturn,' he cries,  
'The tables of those German money-changers,  
That make this house of prayer a den of thieves.'  
Assaulting thus with rude declaim those ears  
Dull with the gentle lowings of fat kine  
And soft excitements of refectory-bell,  
Our Santo leaves him, ere the saint disturb'd,  
In doubt of man or demon, could revolve  
Upon his axis.

*All.* Ah, ah! Well done, Lelio!

*Lelio.* Our friar on this——

*One.* Why the saints smite thee, Lelio!

Now, Lelio!—Eh? nay, Sirs, as I'm alive  
This was my story!

*Another.* Give thee joy of it,

Old Giacco, 'twas a sorry tale, now mine——

*Lelio.* Friends! we grow solemn. Wine, I say. A  
song,

A song.

*One.* Ay, something loyal——

*Lelio.* Worthy friends,

We should do well to purify the air  
Whereof these tales were made; forced by our lips  
Into unwilling treason.

*One.* Lelio !

*Another.* Shame !

*Lelio.* Therefore, my merry boys, I vote a ditty,  
A well-affected ditty—nay, some say  
’Twas writ by Metternich and Del Caretto,  
At Schönbrunn after dinner. Nay, no groans !  
Sweet friends, no groans ! Nay, hear me, friends.

*Shouts from many.* Down with him !

*Lelio.* No Carbonaro——

*Many.* Down with him !

*Lelio.* I call it

The triple crown, or the three jolly kings,  
The Devil——

*Some.* Hear !

*Some.* Hurrah !

*Lelio.* The Devil——

*All.* Hurrah !

*Lelio.* The Pope and the Kaiser.

*All.* Hurrah ! Lelio ! Lelio !

True to the backbone still ! Up with him, boys !

Chair him ! a hall ! a hall ! now, Lelio, now !

Shout cheerly, man—here’s thunder for a chorus !

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## SCENE VI.

A PLAIN. A COTTAGE.

*The Monk* (VITTORIO SANTO). *Two Children* (a Boy and Girl). *Their Father and Mother* (both young) *sit at the cottage door. The Monk draws near.*

*The Monk* (aside). This is the spot. From hence  
my eye unseen

Commands their cottage. Hither have I fared  
Five times at this same hour, and five times learn'd  
To love my nature better. Here I stood,  
And felt, when passing gales in snatches bore me  
Their evening talk, as if some wayward child  
Had pelted me with flowers. She is a poet,  
Or in or out of metre. Rome must have her.  
A mother too, 'tis well ; then there is one thing  
The poet will serve. Ah ! art thou forth to-day,  
Thou little tyrant, that shalt rule for me ?  
My faith ! a lovely boy ! holy St. Mary !  
Hark how he carols out his royalty,  
And, born a sovereign, rules and knows it not.  
The father must be mine too ; he hath bone  
And sinew, and—if the eye's gauge deceive not—  
A soul as brawny. Heavy deeds demand

Such carriers. I will win or lose this night.

Let me draw near.

[*The Children are sporting. The Girl hides among myrtles, and sings.*

*Girl.* Whither wingest thou, wingest thou, winny wind ;

Where, winny wind, where, oh where?

*Boy (singing).* My sister, my sister, I flit forth to find,  
My sister, my sister, the orange-flow'r fair !

*Girl.* Since thy songs thy soft sister seek,  
What wouldst with her? say, oh say.

*Boy.* Oh, to pat her pearl-white cheek,  
And court her with kisses all day !

[*The Child bursts from her hiding place, and the Children chase each other over the plain.*

*The Mother.* Husband ! the music in my soul would'  
chord

Most sweetly with thy voice. Take down thy lute.

*The Father.* Nay, Lila ; bid me not do violence  
To this calm sunset. List that golden laughter,  
Hark to our children ! There is music like  
The hour. From each to each the heart can pass,  
And know no change.

*The Mother.* Sing me a song about them,  
Kind husband. Sing that song I made for thee,  
When once, on a sweet eve like this, we watch'd  
As now our joyous babes—I blessing them,  
Thou marvelling, with show of merry jest,

How they could be so fair.

*The Father.* Even as thou wilt,

Dear Lila. If the spirit of these moments

Deem my voice sacrilege, let him forgive

The singer for the poet.

*He sings.* Oh, Lila ! round our early love,  
What voices went—in days of old !  
Some sleep, and some are heard above,  
And some are here—but changed and cold !

What lights they were that lit the eyes  
That never may again be bright !  
Some shine where stars are dim ; and some  
Have gone like meteors down the night.

I marvell'd not to see them beam,  
Or hear their music round our way ;  
A part of life *they* used to seem,  
But *these*—oh whence are they ?

Ear hath not heard the tones they bring,  
Lip hath not named their name,  
Like primroses around the spring,  
Each after each they came.

I should not wonder, love, to see  
In dreams of elder day,  
The forms of things that used to be,  
But *these*—oh whence are they ?

Dost thou remember when the days  
Were all too short for love and me,  
And we roam'd forth at eve in rays  
Of mingled light from heaven and thee?

One gentle sign so often beam'd  
Upon us with such favouring eyes,  
That every vow we plighted seem'd  
A secret holden with the skies.

Now sometimes, in strange phantasy,  
I think, if stars could leave their sphere,  
And won by the dear love of thee,  
Renew the constellation here,

And shine here with the tender light  
That glinted through the olden trees,  
They would come silently and bright,  
And one by one, like these.

How can a joy so pure and free  
Have sprung from tears and cares?  
I have no beauty—and for thee,  
Thou hast no mirth like theirs.

Yet with strange right each takes his rest,  
Even when he will, on thy fair breast,

Nor doubts nor fears nor prays.  
The daisy smiling on the lea  
Comes not with kindlier trust to be  
Beloved of April days.

I look into their laughing eyes,  
They cannot have more light than thine—  
But treasured by ten thousand ties,  
Mine own I know *thee*, Lila mine.

Wistful I gaze on *them* and say,—  
Fond, checking with a doubtful sigh  
The pride that swells, I know not why—  
These, these, oh whence are they?

[*The Monk draws near.*

*The Father.* Lila! the same pale priest we saw last  
eve!

*The Mother.* Good husband, bid him here. The dust  
of travel

Tells that his way was weary. Holy Sir,  
Will't please you sit with us? The herds are milk'd.  
Our bread is brown, but honest.

*The Monk.* Do not ask me.  
Are you not happy?

*The Wife.* *Happy!* reverend father?  
We thank God, and say yes. This day five years  
One whom I saw for the first time, through tears,

Came with the flowers. When they began to fade  
 How my heart sicken'd ! But God call'd him not  
 With them. And though the snows of winter came  
 He stayed, and held enough of summer with him  
 To fill my house. Should I not be most happy ?  
 Look on my boy, my merry one ! Good father,  
 Which of the angels do they miss in heaven ?  
 Ofttimes at mass I press him close, and tremble  
 To the sweet voices, lest at 'in excelsis'  
 He should remember, and go back.

*The Monk.*

Oh mother,

That art, and art not, kind ! 'Tis a brave boy.

*The Mother.* And then he is so gentle and so fond,  
 And prattles to me sometimes in strange wisdom,  
 And asks of me in such sweet ignorance,  
 That teaching him I weep ; oft, oft, for joy,  
 But oft for very grief, that each task leaves  
 One tiny question less.

*The Monk.*

'Tis a sweet child.

*The Father.* Sir Priest, thou knowest well how poor  
 an image

A mother's love will idolize ; but this  
 Dear boy hath put a woman's heart in me,  
 He is so good, so dutiful——

*The Mother.*

And yet

When he kneels by me at his innocent prayer,  
 Oft I look down and feel that I have need  
 To learn of him.

*The Monk.* Let me bless him.

*The Father.* My son,

The priest would bless thee on thy birth-day ; boy,  
Come bend thee at his knee.

*The Monk.* Thou little child,  
Thy mother's joy, thy father's hope—thou bright,  
Pure dwelling where two fond hearts keep their gladness—  
Thou little potentate of love, who comest  
With solemn sweet dominion to the old,  
Who see thee in thy merry fancies charged  
With the grave embassy of that dear past,  
When they were young like thee—thou vindication  
Of God—thou living witness against all men  
Who have been babes—thou everlasting promise  
Which no man keeps—thou portrait of our nature,  
Which in despair and pride we scorn and worship—  
Thou household-god, whom no iconoclast  
Hath broken,—if I knew a parent's joys,  
If I were proud and full of great ambitions,  
Had haughty limbs that chafed at ill-borne chains,  
If I had known a tyrant's scorn and felt  
That vengeance though bequeathed is still revenge,  
I would pray God to give me such a son !  
Therefore, thou little one, mayst thou sleep well  
This night : and, for thy waking, may it be  
Where there are neither kings nor slaves. Of all  
Thy playmates, mayst thou be the first to die——

*The Mother shrieks.* Ah ! holy father !

*The Monk.* Smitten in the bud  
Mayst thou fade on the stalk that had no thorns  
To save thee from the spoiler—mayst thou——

*The Mother.* Mercy!

*The Father.* Fiend! murderer!

*The Monk.* Did you not bid me bless him?

*The Mother.* My boy! my happy one! my bright-  
eyed babe!

*The Father.* Thou hooded demon! thou hell-priest!

*The Monk.* Be patient.

I will take off the blessing; but hear me,  
And you shall bid me pray for it again.

*The Mother.* Blessing? 'Tis blessing to behold him  
smile

With his bright, innocent, unconscious eyes,  
Which thou wouldst close for ever!

*The Monk.* Is that blessing?

Too happy mother! how thou lov'st to weep!  
Come hither, child. Nay, daughter, tremble not!  
He is a Roman, and can fear no man—  
A child, and dreads not death.

'Tis the purblind  
Dim sense of after years that makes our monsters.  
The earth hath none to children and to angels.  
Eyes weak with vigil, scar'd with scalding tears,  
Betray us, and we start at death and phantoms  
Because they are pale. And the still-groping heart  
Incredulous by over much believing—



Walking by sight dreads the unknown, and clings  
Even to familiar sorrow, and loves more  
The seen earth than the unseen God.

Ay, bright one,

Climb near the lips that speak of death. The word  
Falls on the sunshine of thy face and casts  
No shadow. Thou dost play among the flowers  
Morning and even, and the selfsame wind  
Fosters and scatters them. Why shouldst thou fear?  
Twine thy young arms, thou little budding vine,  
Round the old barren oak; 'tis sweet to love thee,  
Too sweet. I look upon thy brow of promise,  
And see it in the future like some cloud  
Uprising from the distant hills, that seemeth  
To bear up heaven. This may do more. Contain it.  
Contain it and the things which heaven and earth  
Cannot contain. In thine unsullied eyes,  
Not made for tears; in thy bright looks, sweet boy,  
Wherein the blush yet sleeps which sights of shame  
Shall call there, till the weary veins refuse  
Their office, and endurance sends the blood  
Back from the blanch'd cheeks to the terrible heart  
To heave and madden there—(let tyrants tremble  
Who rule pale slaves)—yes, in thy brave proud mien,  
Thou baby hero, that art born in vain,  
I see why Roman mothers wept for glory  
And we for shame. I see the ancient beauty  
Sport on the plain where Brutus watch'd his children,

And give them no supremacy. I see  
Iulus' self. Cornelia would have own'd  
These jewels. Regulus saw nothing fairer  
When from the sands of Carthage his great thought  
Walk'd by the streams of his Italian hills,  
And by the well-known grove beheld his children  
Play round the homeside myrtles, where their mother  
Sat and look'd eastward! Wherein art thou less  
Than Roman? Oh thou hapless flower, that canst not  
Fruit in this frozen land, how shall I bless thee?  
Art thou not noble, gentle, beautiful?  
Hast thou one aspiration to climb aught  
Beside thy mother's knee? Do they not love thee,  
Believe thee, trust thee, hope in thee, adore thee?  
Dost thou not take their cares from morn till eve,  
And in the radiant alchemy of thine eyes  
Transmute them into joys? Runs not their fate  
In that inherited blood that warms thy cheek?  
Were they not things like *thee*, and are they not  
*Themselves*? and do they murmur? What though, fair  
one,

Angels might envy—if they were not angels—  
The stature that the fresh bright air of freedom  
Should fan thee to? It passes the court fashion,  
Breaks footstep in the Austrian ranks, and fits  
No cell in Spielberg. It might even betide  
That Roman arms work'd ill in chains; a voice  
Like that which cheer'd the legions, might be guilty

Of old ancestral words which would sound strange  
In German ears. Nay, there was once a Roman—  
I saw him, and felt nobler! he was like thee!  
Like thee as star to star! If you be parents,  
Fall down and pray that he may die!

*The Mother.*

Good padre,

Pity us.

*The Father.* Priest!

*The Mother.*

Be silent, he is moved,

Perchance *he* was a father.

[*A long pause, the Monk covers his head with his mantle.*]

*The Monk (looking up).* Evening comes  
Apace. The tired ox slackens in the furrow.  
The shade that on your threshold paused but now,  
Hath climb'd the vine where from the eaves the swallow  
Sings early vespers. My full heart prescient  
Heaves to the falling hour. Children, kneel down,  
Let holy words spread evening in your souls,  
Lest they be timeless when the far bell rings  
Ave Maria. [*They kneel. The Monk reads.*]

*The Monk.* And I heard a voice,

A voice from heaven, which said unto me, 'Write,

Blessed are the dead.'

[*He pauses.*]

Rise up! I had forgotten!

Forgive me!

*The Mother.* Reverend father!

*The Father.*

Friend, what say'st thou?

*The Monk.* That if thou wert what that proud man  
 should be  
 Who calls this child 'my son,' this land 'my country,'  
 Thou hadst cried out 'Amen!'

*The Father.* Sir Priest, so please you  
 To speak in riddles—read them.

*The Monk.* I *will* read them.  
 And mine enigma shall be such grim pastime  
 As fiends might play at.

Pity me, this anger  
 Wrongs you. I do forget that you are yet  
 But a few moments off from happiness,  
 And that the music of her shores is singing  
 Still in your ears. We dwellers in the dark  
 Forget the weakness of your daylight eyes.  
 I should remember that the twilight stands  
 'Twixt night and day. My fierce and tropical fancy,  
 Hot with swift pulses, saw the sun go down,  
 And look'd up for the stars. I had a brother—  
 I *had*? Oh heaven! there is no Lazarus  
 So poor as Dives fallen! You whose portion  
 In the abounding present is unspent—  
 You with whose friendships and familiar joys  
 Earth is still populous—you who have not  
 Learn'd yet, when stranger lips descant of love,  
 Unconsciously to look upon the turf—  
 You who are only of this upper world,  
 You know not what it costs to say '*I had*.'

But there shall come a time when ye shall sit  
Safe in this cabin, yet shall feel the rain  
Falling upon you, though your limbs be dry,  
And your hearth warm. And then you shall forgive me,  
And feel that I have something to forgive !  
Then you shall know how sickly and distract  
Thoughts grow, that pass their days beneath the sod,  
And sit whole nights by graves.

I had a brother,  
We were twin shoots from one dead stem. He grew  
Nearer the sun, and ripen'd into beauty ;  
And I within the shadow of my thoughts,  
Pined at his side and loved him. He was brave,  
Gallant and free. I was the silent slave  
Of fancies ; neither laugh'd, nor fought, nor play'd,  
And loved not morn nor eve for very trembling  
At their long wandering shades. In childhood's sports  
He won for me, and I look'd on aloof ;  
And when perchance I heard him call'd my brother,  
Was proud and happy. So we grew together,  
Within our dwelling by the desert plain,  
Where the roe leap'd,  
And from his icy hills the frequent wolf  
Gave chivalry to slaughter. Here and there  
Rude heaps, that had been cities, clad the ground  
With history. And far and near, where grass  
Was greenest and the unconscious goat browsed free,  
The teeming soil was sown with desolations,

As though Time—striding o'er the field he reap'd—  
Warm'd with the spoil, rich droppings for the gleaners  
Threw round his harvest way. Frieze, pedestal,  
Pillars that bore through years the weight of glory,  
And take their rest. Tombs, arches, monuments,  
Vainly set up to save a name, as though  
The eternal served the perishable ; urns,  
Which winds had emptied of their dust, but left  
Full of their immortality. In shrouds  
Of reverent leaves, rich works of wondrous beauty  
Lay sleeping—like the children in the wood—  
Fairer than they. Columns like fallen giants,  
The victor on the vanquish'd, stretch'd so stern  
In death, that not a flower might dare to do  
Their obsequies. And some from sweet Ionia  
With those Ionia bore to Roman skies  
Lay mingled, like a goddess and her mother,  
Who wear, with difference, the co-equal brightness  
Of fadeless youth. The plain thus strew'd with ages  
Flower'd in the sunshine of to-day, and bore me  
The Present and the Past. But there were some  
Proud changeless stones that stood up in the sun,  
And with their shadowy finger on the plain  
Drew the same mystic circle day by day,  
And these I worshipp'd. Honouring them, because  
It needs must be they knew the sense that sign  
Bore in the language of Eternity ;  
And fearing them for that dark hand which ever—

When I drew near their awful face at noon,  
And, spent with wondering, sank down unconscious,  
And slept upon the turf—came back at even  
And cast me shuddering out.

So days wore on,  
And childhood. And the shade of all these ruins  
Fell on my soul. And *he*, my pride, grew up,  
With, and without me. And we were such brothers  
As day and night. We met at morn and eve.  
Each sun uprose to find us hand in hand,  
And see a tender parting. Each first star  
Led back the shades and us. He flush'd with conquest,  
Rich in the well slain antelope, and all  
That feathery wage youth loves to take for labour;  
I laden with new thoughts. Pale, travel-worn,  
Spent with fierce exercise and faint with toil,  
I, who—the shepherd of the plain would tell you—  
Since sunbreak upon one same broken column  
Sat like a Caryatid. So youth was mine,  
And seasons crown'd it manhood.

Manhood came,  
And with it those fierce instincts of strange combat,  
That hurtle in the heart when the new powers,  
Like eager vassals on Ascension-day,  
Crowd round the throned will. Childhood and youth  
May own unwritten law, and kiss the rod  
That strikes, but parleys not. But man must be  
A subject, not a slave. And manhood stood

Before the shadows that had awed the child,  
And bade them answer. And they spoke. My heart  
Stood up. A thousand senses ran to arms,  
To guard the revelation ; but it came not.  
Like a mask'd guest, the voice went through my soul,  
And wandering there long days and nights, made all  
My hours alarums. So the phantom knight,  
In awful legend of the old Romaunt,  
By a proud castle winds his ghostly horn,  
And blows his challenge in at every gate,  
And through the chafed halls stalks the unearthly sound,  
And fills with strange ubiquitous defiance  
Turret and dungeon, battlement and keep,  
Which groan back answering War. While at the blast  
Grim sudden furies fill the martial place,  
Helm rings with hauberk, scutcheon'd gonfalons  
Wave in no wind. Shields rattle. Chargers neigh  
To unblown clarions. Weapons clash unbid  
On the vex'd walls, and men, with swords half-drawn,  
Start up and stare into the troublous air.  
Not otherwise the voice disturb'd my soul,  
Till spectral nights and strange unnatural days  
Beckon'd their neighbour, Death. I felt him chill  
The sunshine round me. But I only look'd  
More fondly for my brother.

When day went,  
And we met by the well-known spot at even,  
And by the kindred moon, he saw the pale



Faint life that lean'd upon his stalwart beauty,  
I was a dearer burden than the spoils  
Of his best hunting field. With tender pain  
He led me forth at sunrise, and came back  
Before the dews. And, with moist eyes, I mark'd  
Daily he brought home less and less at even,  
With forethought of the day's sad robbery,  
Keeping in fond economy more strength  
To lend mine indigence. And thus I measur'd  
My life's receding tide. 'Twas beautiful  
To see, as each wave ebb'd from earth, the sands  
Purple with flowers from heaven. He gave me cares,  
I paid him from the alms the hills, and vales,  
Plains, ruins, waters, fields, and skies had thrown me  
Through my long hours of waiting. I beheld him—  
And so you shall behold your child one day—  
Sublime as if a god of old had stepp'd  
Warm from his marble pedestal. I gave him  
Nectar for gods. I saw his eyes light up,  
And into his heroic hand I put  
The weapon of my thoughts. And he smote with it—  
Look to your boy, he will smite so—he smote  
And struck such flashes from a despot's helm  
As might set thrones on fire. And some who winced  
Complain'd. When the lamb bleats in the Abruzzi,  
The wolf is silent—'tis the tyrant's music ;  
But let one miscreant yelper howl, and mark  
How all the pack gives tongue. An outraged *people*

Cries out for ages, and the sacred sound  
Broods o'er our land, and finds no wind to bear  
The thankless burden hence. A *tyrant* yells,—  
Though but the very meanest starveling hound,  
The most distemper'd cur that feeds upon  
The garbage thrown from palaces—no matter—  
A thousand echoes tell it in Vienna,  
And fill the air with German. Oh my brother,  
Would I had been content to be thy debtor,  
Nor paid thee in a coin that bore the stamp  
Of freedom in a captive land ! They seized him,  
They seized ! Who seized ? Some Roman lictor—one  
Beneath whose reverend hand it would be glory  
To think that heroes suffer'd so, and counted  
The touch no shame ? Goths, whose barbarian sires  
Made holiday for ours. Vandals and Huns.  
The cubs of dams more savage than our mothers  
Deign'd to enslave ; all that rank Northern growth,  
By whose rude hands the might of bones and thews  
Bearded our conscript fathers in the forum,  
And beards their children here,—who sit like them,  
Silent, but not like them sublime. Camillus !  
What ! can we lounge upon our curule chairs,  
And play the Roman only in endurance ?  
Earth ! what hast thou of vigour less than Greece,  
That in that genial soil the serpent's teeth  
Sprang up arm'd men ;—and here we have sown heroes  
And reap—grass ! Yes. He fell. Behold your son :

Picture him nobler than the noblest vision  
Of thy day-dreams, poor mother ! See, the bloodhounds  
Have track'd him to your cot. A faded face  
Lies with dark uprais'd eyes of love before  
The fond heroic brother. Heavenly calm  
Warders the room, and of the sweet emotions  
Of the rejoicing world without, lets in  
Only the silent sunshine. The door bursts !  
A shriek ! a shout ! they seize him ! The pale form  
Springs at the first and falls. Now see your hero  
Like an inspired colossus striding o'er him.  
With either hand he hurls a savage hence,  
Foots each bare neck, with twice another twain  
Acquaints the sounding walls. Falls by some blow  
From unseen hand. Sinks by the yelling weight  
Of crowds. A moment more, and like dead game  
Slung by some trooper's side, mother, he greets thee,  
And leaves thee baptized in his sprinkled gore,  
To faiths kings dream not of. Oh brother, brother,  
Oh memory ! that canst bring me back such woes  
And break not ! Thus they tore him from me. Ah,  
Poor tender child, why doth thy baby heart  
Look up through saddening eyes ? What ! little one,  
And canst thou read the future ? Dost thou know  
That he was like thee ? Ay, poor mother, clasp him,  
Clasp him while yet thou mayst ! Secure as thou  
That morn I clasp'd my brother ! Dost thou ask  
What tidings fell upon the failing ear

Of him who in the cottage by the plain  
Lay weeping? Be it as thou wilt, poor mother,  
It concerns thee ;—what if of all thy tears —  
Thy fated tears—a few are shed too soon?  
For me I am a rock which, long years hence,  
The storms stripp'd rudely, and with my few flowers  
Took all that nursed them, and to after tempests  
Left but the cold bare stone. In earth or heaven  
I have no more to fear. But for *thee*, mother,  
I will read out this story, and perchance  
Teach thee to strike the fire that yet may burn  
The page ere it be thine.

*The Mother.* Oh that thou wouldst !

*The Monk.* Not of the dungeons, those dark cata-  
combs

Where our oppressors heap'd their sins for ages,  
Wrong after wrong, till the o'er-surfeited rock  
At the great day of reckoning shall belch up  
A thousand years to cry for vengeance. No,  
Those Roman limbs were purchased far too dearly  
To rot in Spielberg. He was tall of stature,  
And fair to look upon. So shall your son  
Be tall and fair. It pleased some small tyrant  
To see such goodly slaves. The shameful trappings  
Of a detested loyalty, the fillets  
That deck the sacrifice, the fearful gewgaws  
That ratify the compact, when the body  
Serves what the soul abhors, and with the bribe

Tricks out the whoredom, these worse chains replaced  
The felon's fetters, and the outraged Roman  
Rose up an Austrian soldier ! The plot thickens—  
The shadow of the end is on my soul—  
Count tears for words—nay, you are parents—I  
Was but a brother—wherefore should I speak ?  
Poor mother ! in this Jordan I have need  
To be baptized of you. My soul is wise  
In grief. Yet a few years and you shall smile—  
If you *can* smile—to think I taught ye. Tell me,  
What would your gallant boy, if tyrants bade him  
Shed Roman blood like rain ? Look on your Roman !  
Mine was no less !—*Was*—Oh my heart ! He hurl'd—  
His proud looks prouder than his words of pride,—  
With desperate hand the execrated sword  
Flagrant before the despot and defied him !  
Rent from his breast the guilt dishonour, spurn'd it  
Into Italian dust. Erect, defiant,  
Before the host cried Freedom ! and was doom'd,  
Doom'd to a coward's death. They led him forth,  
They led him forth a pace upon the Lea,  
Scourged, buffeted, reviled, and only asking  
To die unbound, with his unconquer'd face  
Turn'd to the south and home. And they denied him.  
By a rude trench where fresh-turn'd earth lay dark,  
He stood a passing moment, and since then  
I say 'I had a brother.'

If I weep

To see your child, forgive me, and remember  
When I drew near his sport this eve, and you  
Look'd on with smiles, and I with sighs, you marvell'd.  
Why marvel, when we saw not the same scene?  
Before you lay the happy evening world,  
O'er-joyous in the promise of more joy,  
And there he sported like a merry voice  
Singing of morrows. Mine eyes sought the same  
Point of the compass, but for me the shades  
In my dark soul went forth to meet the night,  
The night that look'd from grove and thicket, calling  
By missionary winds and twilight birds  
All earth to that meek face wherein she payeth  
Her duties to the moon. He sported, too,  
In my world, and 'twas sweet to look on him.  
But to my eyes, in ambient atmospheres  
Of tints and hues that brighten'd other days,  
Floated round smiling—like a choir of angels  
About a cherub—that old dreamy past,  
In which he plays my brother. Near his feet  
There was a long sad mound, and by the mound  
Dark drops of blood. And when he prattled out  
His childish joy, my heart heard distant muskets,  
And to my ear the heavy earth fell dead  
Into a coffinless grave.

[*The vesper bell sounds from the distant convent.*

Ave Maria!

*The Mother (throwing herself passionately to the ground).*

Ave Maria ! Happy evermore,  
Oh Mater Unigeniti—save, save,  
Oh save my child !

*The Father.* Ave Maria ! Queen  
Of judgment that went forth to victory !  
Remember desolation blights the hills  
That slew the Crucified ! Mother avenged !  
If my first-born must be like thine, grant vengeance  
Like thine !

*The Mother.* If it must be——

*The Monk.* Ave Maria ! say  
It shall *not* be ! Thou who didst bear salvation !  
Oh Virgin ! thou who in thy breast didst carry  
The fate of worlds unfainting—give, give strength  
To these !

*The Father and Mother.* Oh Mother, pity us !——

*The Monk.* Oh Mother,  
Pity our country ! Mater benedicta !  
Thou who three days didst watch a tomb in tears,  
Pity our vigil of a thousand years,  
And bid the dead arise !

*The Father and Mother.* Oh Queen of sighs,  
Look down on us from thy fair heaven with eyes  
Softer than evening !

*The Mother.* Mater casta, pia,  
Quondam afflicta—take him to thy skies !  
Even what thou wilt for me, but oh, for him

Hast thou no place among thy seraphim?  
 Is he not thine? Thou gavest him. Take, oh take  
 The bright gift back, for a sad mother's sake,  
 Oh Mother!

*The Monk.* Ah?

*The Father.* Amen!

*The Monk.* Ave Maria! [*They rise.*

*The Father.* Priest, hast thou no Amen?

*The Monk.* Did I not tell you  
 That you should crave my blessing, though it fell  
 Black as a curse?

*The Mother.* Alas!

*The Monk.* Says the priest ill  
 Who prays the mother's prayer?

*The Mother.* Be merciful!

*The Monk.* Nay, be *you* merciful. I look upon  
 This gentle boy, and every blushing feature  
 Of his young beauty cries for mercy——

*The Mother.* Priest,  
 If thou art false in all things as in this,  
 God help thee. I have been a tender mother!

*The Monk.* Thou filicide! Why should he die?

This land,  
 Hath it no place for him? This Roman sunshine,  
 Doth it fall strangely on his cheek?

These flowers,  
 Twine they not kindly with his hair, and peep  
 With fondness in his brighter face?



*The Boy.* Oh, mother,  
Tell him they love me.

*The Mother.* Hush ! my beautiful ;  
What is there loves thee not ?

*The Monk.* Why should he die,  
Whom the whole world surrounds, and with chaste voices  
Woos to sweet life ? You craven hearts ! Who slew  
My brother, and shall slay your son ? These hills ?  
These woods that frown on you ? The sun and moon,  
That look down on their ancient shrines, and smile  
That you adore their God ? Tell me, what lot  
Is desperate which the heaven and earth condemn not ?  
Did this land, which bore gods, spend all its strength  
In the sublime conception, and birth-worn  
Bring pigmies forth in these last days ? What fate  
Made only *Romans* mortal ? Is it written  
That when the oppressor meets the oppress'd, and one  
Dies, it must be the *slave* ? You Romans !—stay,  
I have o'ershot myself. You will betray me.  
You have look'd on this child for five long years,  
Five long fond loving years, and never wish'd  
To save him—why should I——

*The Mother.* Oh father, save him !  
Bid me die—on my knees——

*The Father.* Peace. Priest, the cloud  
Is silent till it lightens ; dost thou take me ?

*The Monk.* Thou hast a fearless eye.

*The Father.* Priest, try my heart !

*The Monk.* Ah, traitor! what? 'tis well. Yes, he  
for whom

That fair boy prattles hath a lifelong preacher  
No father yet sat under unconverted.

We men are calm or hurricane. The heart  
Fills silently, and at the last wrong bursts.

*He* laughs his merry creed out at all hours,  
And day and night looks treason.

*The Father.* Come the day

When deeds shall back his looks!

*The Monk.* Well said, brave Roman!

Thy hand! and we are brothers. Shall we brook  
To see this Italy our fathers left us  
Held for an Austrian garden?

*The Father.* Noble priest,

Some say the garden bears strange fruit ere long,  
But the old soil is crop-sore, and craves fattening  
With German blood.

*The Monk.* Ah?

*The Father.* Hast thou heard some whispers

The wind brings from Sardinia? Is it well?

*The Monk.* All things are well, but silence and endurance.

*The Father.* Bend here! the very spider on the wall  
Must not hear this——

*The Monk.* (Ay, what so pitiful,  
So loathsome, but it may connive with kings?)

*The Father.* Hark in thine ear. The jolly lords of  
Naples,  
Florence, Turin, Verona, ay, Modena,  
And some too near to name, ride bravely,—eh?  
What if the horse kick?

*The Monk.* Ah?

*The Father.* This is fair weather;  
Worse grubs have grown to butterflies. How now,  
If these same Duchies spread their wings Republics?  
What then, my Carbonaro? Is it well?

*The Monk.* 'Tis well. The poorest living face hath  
grace  
Beside a death's-head. That fierce king did well  
Who slew the priests of Baal, hew'd down his groves, —  
And spoil'd his altars. But that king did better  
Who crown'd Moriah. 'Tis a zealot's faith  
That blasts the shrines of the false god, but builds  
No temple to the true.

*The Father.* Ay, what is Truth?  
Pilate lacks answer.

*The Monk.* The bold man like thee,  
Who lays his life in a strange hand——

*The Father (starting).* Ah, Priest!  
His life—how now?

*The Monk.* Jestest, my gentle Roman?  
Wronged men like us, sworn to such deeds as ours,  
Leave courtly phrases when they speak of *treason*.  
Alas, poor Italy! to tell his fortune

To whom a priest's lips can bring home rebellion,  
Merits no sorcerer's fee. A truce to trifling.  
What wasted words are these! Thou art a father,  
Have I not said to thee this boy that is  
To die, may live—what more?

*The Father.* No more. Sir Priest,  
Thou takest me ill. There is no wild rebellion  
So fierce I have not fire enough to light it.  
If I had rather chosen to be free,  
Of all men—so. Thou hast my faith, who holdest  
My halter.

*The Mother.* And, by Heaven, thou hast it, Priest,  
Though we were freer than a thousand winds!  
Ay, and our lives a million million times  
Lived and died over, so thou wilt but save  
My child.

*The Monk.* Have I not said it? Wherefore, friends,  
Is this unseemly turbulence of passion?  
Did you not call me to your solemn council?  
Had I not told you how my brother died?  
Had you not wept with vision of those pangs,  
Which in that boy's face yet shall rack your eyes?—

*The Mother.* *Shall?* Oh, my father! Oh, my  
father!

*The Monk.* SHALL.  
He who would conquer kings, *himself* must be  
The first king conquer'd. Shall a rebel start  
To hear rebellion? Shall I have my counsel

Cried up and down the earth, like the small will  
Of vulgar majesty? He who would creep  
To sleeping game is silent. Will they stand  
Firm, think you, at the judgment and the scaffold,  
Who start beneath the lintel of their homes,  
And rave at evening chat? No. He must die.

[*The mother starts up, seizing a knife that lies near.*

*The Mother.* Priest! I am but a woman, and a weak  
one!

I think thee faithful, and in that thought bless thee.  
I am a wife, a wife, Priest, and a true one;  
I think *him* brave, and in that thought revere him;  
But let me doubt ye—only let me doubt ye—  
And I would wash that hearthstone in your blood,  
If but the poorest spatter on the wall  
Would save my child!

*The Monk (aside).* Then by that chain I lead thee,  
Wild lioness.

(*Aloud.*) There heaves a bosom meet  
To suckle Freedom. Calm thee, Roman mother,  
That yet shalt smile in Rome. The day may come  
To strike; till then seal up thine own hot lips,  
As thou wouldst seal thy foe's. Be true, a hero  
Shall call thee 'mother!' Fail but in thy fealty  
To the least word of mine, my heaviest grief  
Is bliss beside thy lightest. Peace. This seal  
Makes the bond perfect. Now to calmer counsel.  
Thou say'st, brave Roman, that our lords ride fiercely,

That the steed chafes already—see! he throws them.  
 Who vaults into the saddle? Every flock  
 Has slain its pigmy swain—salvete greges!  
 But, patriot, who shall lead the sheep to pasture,  
 And keep the wolf at bay?

*The Father.* Each separate state  
 Must crown the sovereign people.

*The Monk.* By what name  
 Will men speak, think ye, of that seven-hill'd city,  
 Within whose catacombs dominion sleeps,  
 And in whose ruins Time himself walks lightly,  
 Lest she should stir below?

*The Father.* Rome.

*The Monk.* And the rest,  
 How do you name them?

*The Father.* By the names they found  
 Noble enough to strike in; thus, Milan.

*The Monk.* And why? Is the sky bluer at Milan  
 Than where we stand? Are the clouds red at noon?  
 Or by what mystic omen doth the world  
 Call for this christening? Doth Dame Nature, old,  
 And yearning to be fruitful in her dotage,  
 Breed names, and call them children?

When you dream  
 Of our Italian fatherland, it glitters  
 With half a hecatomb of palaces,  
 Each royal. Your free heart is sad. You frown.  
 Strike off their crowns. Salute them commonweals,

And wake up shouting 'Glory!' How now, Roman,  
If some strong arm stretching from sea to sea  
Sweep all your pasteboard kickshaws to the ocean,  
And leave us the broad field of Italy  
To build up ROME?

Marvel not, gentle friends,  
Sprung out of yesterday, poor hearts, and growing  
Like creeping plants, even to the size and fashion  
Of what ye lean on—marvel not that we  
Who worship Freedom with one soul, adore her  
In different deity. As I have told you,  
Dark fanes and reverend trophies, stones that might  
Be portals to the world; the fossil limbs  
By which we build the giants of old time;  
Grey wonders stranger for decay; strange fragments  
Of forms once held divine, and still, like angels,  
Immortal everywhere; lone hermit columns,  
Whereto the ideal hath no space to add  
The pile they bore; stern pediments that look'd  
On altars where antipodes burnt incense,  
And the three arms of the great globe piled up  
Their several tribute; all the sacred shades  
Which the great Past receding from the world  
Casts out of heaven on earth;—these and like these,  
The high, the deep, the eternal, the unbounded,  
Were sponsors to my soul: and if my thought,  
Where your more nice and neoteric fancy  
Labours with townships, deals out continents,

Think it no marvel. Listen.

The sunrise

Of that dread day which found me brotherless,  
Saw a pale face on a low bed. Despair  
Gave life by taking it. That evening's sun  
Fell on the empty pallet, and beside it  
An arm'd man, flush'd to wildness.

Lost, alone,

Every sweet structure of my heart in heaps,  
With the one terrible shock ; mazed, ignorant  
Of all things but the one which cast them forth,  
The desolation in my soul cried out,  
And rushing to the ruins I fell down,  
The darkest ruin of all. I knelt and wept,  
And was a child before them, with the madness  
Of a man's heart. I fell upon my face.  
Strange sleep possess'd me. Through the hot short  
night,

Across the hotter desert of my brain  
My life went past. All seasons new and old,  
All hours of day and night, all thoughts, fears, fancies,  
Born on this spot, met as in after-death  
About me ; and of each my tatter'd heart  
Begg'd healing and found none. At each new face  
I look'd up wild with hope, and look'd down fierce  
With chafed expectance. Then I rose and cursed  
All hope, all thought, all knowledge, all belief,  
And fell down still believing. With each hour



In my spent soul some lingering faith went out,  
Woes that began in fire had burnt to blackness,  
The very good within me had grown grim,  
'The frenzy of my shipwreck'd heart had thrown  
Its last crust overboard—then, then, oh God !  
Then in the midnight darkness of my passion,  
The veil was rent which hid the holy of holies,  
And I beheld and worshipp'd. Mad despair  
Rung out the desperate challenge—' What art thou,  
Unpitying presence ! which for years beside  
These stones hast stood before me, pass'd me, touch'd me,  
Shook my blind sense, and seal'd my eyes from seeing ?  
Tell me, that I may curse thee !'

The sun rose.

Forth towards me as in awful adjuration  
Each ruin stretch'd appealing shades. There came  
Soft lightning on my soul, and by a voice  
Ineffable, and heard not with the ears,  
'ROME.' At that sound a thousand thousand voices  
Spread it through all things. Each imperial column,  
Each prone grey stone, touch'd by the eloquent winds,  
Heard it and gave it back. Trees, woods and fountains  
In musical confusion, leaves, buds, blossoms—  
Even to small flowers unseen, with voices smaller  
Than treble of a fay—atoms of sound  
Whereof a thousand falling on one ear,  
The unwitting sense should count them troubled silence—  
Birds, brooks, and waterfalls,—all tongues of dawn,

The very morning hum of summer time,  
Swell'd the sweet tumult; early mists that lay  
Silent on hill-tops, vocal in the sun  
Roll'd off like waves of voices, the stir'd air  
Sung with bright ecstasy. Down came the thunder,  
Like a vast hull cleaving the sea of sound,  
That lash'd up louder; then the hills cried out,  
And emulous the valleys; all the earth  
Shook with the sounding ardour, and methought  
My flush'd soul, drunk with zeal, leap'd high and shouted,  
ROME! With that name, incomprehensible beauty  
Fill'd the still grate air from earth to heaven,  
And knowing I knew not. Even as one dead  
I fell. As though that one great sight accomplish'd  
All consciousness, and the progressive sense  
Reaching the goal stood still.

Ere I awoke,

The sun had mounted the proud throne of noon,  
Received the homage of the world, and stopt  
From his high-place well-pleased.

Calm, brave, serene,

Refresh'd as from a sleep of ages, weak  
As a birth-weary mother, but yet strong  
In cast-out sorrows, I stood up and gazed  
With long looks of sweet wonder. The fierce craving  
In my lank hungry soul had ceased. The thirst  
That burn'd my heart was quench'd. The mystic  
yearning

For something ever near, and ever far,  
That made my life one dream of wasting fever,  
Was over. All those indistinct strange voices  
Wherein, like waters underground, great truths  
Were heaving in my heart, and lash'd its sides  
To bursting ; those dim tones wherein, like fragrance  
From troubled flowers at midnight, unseen balm  
Went up in my dark soul, all the forerunners,  
The thousand messengers by which this night  
Had told me it would come,—all partial knowledge  
Before the consummation fell away  
As things that had no office ; wither'd up  
Like blossom on the fruit. Thus it must be  
That noble man who deems his nature born  
As vast as truth, must sweat, and toil, and suffer,  
And overcome—enduring. When the heart  
Adds a new planet to its heaven, great portents  
Clash the celestial influence ; strange signs  
Of coming dread, mysterious agencies,  
And omens inconceivable convulse  
The expectant system, while the stranger sails  
Still out of sight in space. Dim echoings  
Not of the truth, but witnessing the truth—  
Like the resounding thunder of the rock  
Which the sea passes—rushing thoughts like heralds,  
Voices which seem to clear the way for greatness,  
Cry advent in the soul, like the far shoutings  
That say a monarch comes. These must go by,

And then the man who can outwatch this vigil  
Sees the apocalypse. Oh that first hour  
Within the Eden of a quiet soul !  
Oh for that bounteous hour, to him whose youth,  
Bred up in grief's sad penury, hath found  
Joy's daily pittance all too poor to lay  
One pleasance by ; oh that Pierian hour  
When first the plenteous life o'erwelling sends  
Its irrigating streams before the face  
Of the young hope, and decks, in frondent distance,  
To-morrow with the verdure of to-day.  
That hour when first the slipping foot grows firm  
Upon some plot of present, and we gaze  
From the sufficient rock with softening eyes  
Across the green sweet pastures of the future,  
And for the first time dare to look on them  
As heritage. How the exulting thoughts,  
Like children on a holiday, rush forth  
And shout, and call to every humming bee,  
And bless the birds for angels ! Oh that hour !  
In the reflected sunshine of remembrance  
My heart is melting. Twilight and the dews  
Proclaim me parlous. 'Tis a sorry string  
That, being struck, is silent. Farewell Romans.  
Meet me to-morrow here. This is no mood  
To plan stern deeds. Farewell. Remember, courage,  
Truth, silence. If you fail in either, look  
Upon your boy.

## SCENE VII.

A LONELY SPOT. THE TURF-GROWN SITE OF SOME  
OLD ROMAN AMPHITHEATRE.

*A meeting of Minstrels. An aged Bard presides.*

*The Monk enters.*

*The Monk (to a Minstrel).* Sir,

I have walk'd far and crave a seat.

*Minstrel (to another).* His reverence

Is weary and would sit. Is it against  
The statutes of our order ?

*Second Minstrel.* Holy Sir,

There are good feet that do not walk Parnassus.  
Behold us here a minstrel convocation,  
And deem it no irreverence if we say,  
That in that company of bards a priest  
Lacks civic rights.

*The Monk.* Sir, *thou* art not yet free  
Of that most holy guild. Thy soul hath yet  
To learn the instinctive flight which cleaves the air  
Of immortality. I do perceive  
As yet it wings by sight. The dove that bears  
The poet's message starts from that pure height  
Where earthly fashions fade. Let common eyes  
Read men in frock and cowl. The creeping thing  
That harbours in the bark knows not the region  
Where the fruit hangs. I hoped, Sirs, to find here

A nobler estimation.

*Another Minstrel.* And thou *shalt*.

*Others.* Bravo ! Well said. Hear Giulio !

*Another.* This guitar,

Its face, Sir Priest, like mine, is brown with age ;

Find me the newest dainty from Cremona

That dares a bar with it !

*Another.* Or mine, and yet

'Twas the sole heritage my grandsire left.

*Another.* Would we, Sir Priest, exchange these  
twisted entrails

For chords of gold ?

*Another.* Faith, I would string my lute

With hangman's hemp, if it made music.

*Others.* Ay,

And I. And I. And I.

*The President.* Sir and good father,

You see us here a humble company—

I speak the language of the world, Sir, nor

Affirming nor denying—(the wayfarer

Of many lands is not responsible

For each vernacular)—Sir, in what stature

We may be seen by the renewing angel

Some few years hence I say not, but you see us

Being what we are, met to pursue an art

Lightly esteem'd, but which to name divine

Is not the filial rapture of a son,

Since in the change of time it hath not changed ;

Indigenous to all the earth. A spirit

Evoked by many, but a bound familiar  
To no magician yet. The equal tenant  
Of loftiest palace and of lowliest cot,  
Treading the rustic and the royal floor  
To the same step and time. In every age,  
With all the reverence that man claims as man,  
Preaching to clouted clown, and with no more  
To thronèd kings. The unrespectful friend—  
In such celestial wise as gods befriend—  
By turns of haughtiest monarch, humblest swain ;  
And with impartial love and power alike  
Ennobling prince and peasant. Giving all,  
Receiving never. What else makes a god ?  
What human art looks so divine on earth ?  
And, as you tell us, seraphs in high heaven  
Find nothing worthier. Sir, accept me well,  
Let not these lutes, pipes, harps, and dulcimers,  
And outward signs of the musician's trade,  
Mis-teach you of us. Reverend Sir, believe not  
That—priests of Harmony—our service knows  
One only of her temples. Sir, we hope  
One day to serve her where the ears of flesh  
Cannot inherit ; where material sounds  
Enrobe no more her pure divinity.  
And we, *uncumber'd* by the aids of sense,  
Shall see, and in the silent universe  
Adore her. Holy Sir, each minstrel here  
Is poet also.

*The Monk.* Canst thou tell me, friend,  
What 'tis to be a poet?

*President.* Such the theme  
Of this day's contest.

*The Monk.* Let me strike a string  
In such a strife.

*President.* Read thou this riddle for us,  
And, father, this my chair I abdicate,  
And crown thee king of bards.

*The Monk.* Nay, friend, forbear—  
Prithce no kings. I would believe, good brother,  
All honest here. Have you a kind harp, friends,  
That for a stranger's sake will do sweet duty  
In unaccustomed hands?

*One.* Take mine.

*Another.* Or mine.

*Another.* Or mine.

*Another (aside).* Now, Sackcloth !

*Another (aside).* Look to hear Apollo  
Discourse Church music !

*Another (aside).* To the buttery-hatch,  
Ye strolling thrummers. 'Tis alms-giving day,  
My life the godly almoner is good  
At broken victuals. How many stale masses,  
Crusts scriptural and classic bones——

*Another.* Fie, Henri.  
Thy wanton ditty !



*Henri.* Ingrate ! wot I not  
The priest was coming ?

*Another (aside).* Hush, clean ears, clean ears,  
A psalm at least !

*Another.* Surely the Song of Songs.

*Henri.* Ay, but no Solomon's.

*Others.* Friends, friends, friends,  
Silence.

*The Monk sings.* The poet bends above his lyre and  
strikes—

No smile, no smile of rapture on his face ;—  
The poet bends above his lyre and strikes,  
No fire, no fire of passion, in his eye ;—  
The poet bends above his lyre and strikes,  
No flush, no prophet's flush, upon his cheek ;—  
Calm as the grand white cloud where thunders sleep,  
Like a wrapt listener—not in vain to listen—  
Feeling the winds with every sense to catch  
Some far sound wandering in the depths of space.  
The poet bends above his lyre and strikes.

[*Interlude of music.*]

The poet bends above his lyre and strikes.  
Ah Heaven ! I hear ! Again. Ah Heaven, I hear !  
Again :—the vacant eyes are moist with tears !  
Again :—they gleam with vision. Bending lower,  
Crowding his soul upon the strings.—Again.  
Hark, hark, thou heart that leapest ! Ye thrill'd fibres !  
See the triumphant minstrel in the dust,

To his own music. Hark ! Angels in heaven  
Catch it on golden harps ! Down float their echoes  
Richer than dews of Paradise. Inspired,  
Tuning each chord to the enchanted key,  
The poet sweeps the strings and wakes, awe-stricken,  
The sounds that never die. From hill to hill  
They vibrate round the world of time, as deep  
Calleth to deep.

*[Here the Monk ceases to sing.]*

But note like this stirs not  
The wind of every day. And 'tis the ear  
To know it, woo it, wait for it, and stand  
Amid a Babel deaf to other speech,  
That makes a poet. And from ear like this,  
That troubling of the air which common men  
Call harmony, falls unrespected off,  
As balls from a charm'd life.

Hear yet again  
A better parable. The good man hears  
The voice in which God speaks to men. The poet,  
In some wrapt moment of intense attendance,  
The skies being genial and the earthly air  
Propitious, catches on the inward ear  
The awful and unutterable meanings  
Of a divine soliloquy.

Soul-trembling  
With incommunicable things, he speaks  
At infinite distance. So a babe in smiles

Repeats the unknown and unknowable  
Joys of a smiling mother.

*President.* Victor, hail !

How say you, friends—a triumph ?

*Many.* Crown him, crown him !

*The Monk.* Good friends, fair brothers, how have I  
deserved this ?

Whose chattels have I seized, whose hearth profaned,  
Whom have I slain, whose daughter have I ravish'd,  
That you should cry of *crowns* ?

*President.* Sir, reverend Sir,

This chair of state is yours.

*All.* Ascend, ascend !

*The Monk.* Friends, brother bards, since thus you  
bid me call you,

With a long weary journey must I buy  
The honours of this moment ? When I spent  
Those labours—all my wealth—they were disbursed  
In the shrewd estimate that so much outlay  
Invested in your wisdom could but yield  
A goodly increase. Only on such venture  
Prudence, the soul's stern sacristan, paid down  
The perils of this pilgrimage. Which of you,  
Receiving wherewithal to buy a harp,  
Shall spend it on a chaplet ? Which among you,  
Playing the overture to some mild air  
Of sweet attendance and humility,  
Succeeds it with a march ? My gentle friends,

Let me go even as I came,—as much  
Wiser as you may please—in all things else  
No wit less humble. Sir, and my good father,  
Resume the place of honour. These grey hairs  
And time-taught looks beseech it. I beseech you,  
Speak more at length. Methinks the chorister years  
Must needs chant nobly in such reverend walls.  
For me, I claim the seat of a disciple,  
And if in any wise I have excell'd,  
And I yet fear, dear friends, you do mistake  
The stature of your courtesy for that  
Of my desert—reward me, ere we part,  
With one more hearing.

*Many shout.* Ten! Agreed. Agreed.  
Agreed. Long live the Monk. Well said!

*President.* Companions,  
You have heard the conqueror. While we have forgotten  
Our wonted duties for this episode,  
The unoblivious sun hath paused not once;  
Our time is far spent, and five harps are still  
Unstruck. Hath any brother yet unheard  
Any unbaptized child of voice or lute  
Born since our last song-feast, whereon he craves  
Fraternal benediction? Let each such  
Stand forth.

*A Minstrel.* I have a tale of rural pity,  
Set in a rustic measure to such music  
As the uncertain winds, and rustling leaves,

And devious sounds of night made round the heads  
Of them it sings. A very simple sorrow,  
To be heard only in the silent hours  
It sigh'd in. Use it gently, Sirs ; I call it  
'The Winter's Night.'

*President.* Acquit thee, brother !

*All.* Hear!

*Minstrel sings.* And she stood at its father's gate,  
At its father's gate she stood,  
With her baby at her breast ;  
'Twas about the hour of rest—  
There were lights within the place—  
The old moon began to sink,  
(Long, like her, upon the wane,)  
It grew dark ; she drew her hood  
Close about her pallid face ;  
At the portal down she sate,  
Where she will not sit again.  
'Little one,' she slowly said,  
Bending low her lowly head,  
'In all this wide world only thee,  
And my shame, *he* gave to me.  
When *thou* camest I did think  
On that other gift of his—  
Hating that I dreaded this.  
Thou art fair—but so was he ;  
'Tis a winning smile of thine,—  
Ah ! what fatal praise it is !—

One such smile once won all mine.  
Little one, I not repine,  
It befits me well to wait  
My lord's will, till I be dead—  
Once it was a gentler will !'

With that, a night-breeze full chill,  
Shook some dead leaves from the lime ;  
At the sad sound, loud and burly  
Like a warder, went the blast  
Round about the lordly house ;  
Hustled her with menial wrath,  
Much compelling forth her cast,  
Who was all too fain to go ;  
She sank down upon the path—  
She cower'd lower, murmuring low,  
'What was I that I should earn,  
For I loved him, more return  
Than I look'd for of the sun,  
When he smiled upon me early  
In our merry milking-time?'

Then was silence all ; the mouse  
Rustled with the beechen mast,  
The lank fox yelp'd round, the owl  
Floating, shriek'd pale horror past ;  
Strange and evil-omen'd fowl  
Croak'd about her, and knew not.

Round her had the last bat fed.  
'Little one,' she said, 'the cot  
Where I bore thee was too low  
For a haughty baron's bride.  
Little one, I hope to go  
Where the palace-halls are wide ;  
When thou prattlest at his knee,  
Wilt thou sometimes speak of me ?  
Tell him, in some eve,' she said,  
'Where thou knowest I shall be.  
When he hears that I am grand,  
In those mansions ever fair,  
Will he look upon me there  
As a lady of the land,  
And think no more in scorn  
Upon thee and on the dead ?'  
All below the garden banks,  
Where the blighted aspens grew,  
Faded leaves faint breezes blew,  
As in pity, round her. Then  
Low whispering in her plaintive plight,  
Her shivering babe she nearer nurst.  
'Tis a bitter night,' said she,  
'Little one, a dreary night.  
Little shalt thou bless the first,  
Pass'd upon thy father's ground.  
Ay! cower closer in thy nest,  
Birdie! that didst never build.

There is warmth enough for thee,  
Though the frost shall split the tree  
Where it rocks.'  
'Little one,' she said again,  
'Babe,' she said, 'my little son,  
Thou and I at last must part ;  
There is in my freezing heart  
Only life enough for one.  
By the crowing of the cocks,  
Early steps will tread the way,  
Could mine arms but wrap thee round  
Till the dawning of the day !'  
Silent then she seem'd to pray,  
Then she spoke like one in pain,  
'Little one, it shall be done,  
I will keep thee back no more ;  
It were sweet to go together,  
If thou couldst be mine alone ;  
As it is I must restore  
Treasure not mine own.  
All the gift and the sweet thanks  
Will be over by to-morrow.  
He must weep some tears to see  
What at morn they will bring in  
Where she dared not living come.  
He will take thee to his home,  
And bless the mother in the child.  
Little one, 'tis sweet to me,



Who once gave him all I had—  
Hoped it duty, found it sin—  
Once more to give all, but now  
Take no shame, and no more sorrow  
Than a death-pang sets at rest.  
Closer then her babe she prest,  
Chiller sank the wintry weather.  
Once again the owl cried near,  
Once more croak'd the strange night-bird ;  
From the stagnance of the fosse  
Lorn pale mists, like winding-gear,  
Hung about her and look'd sad ;  
Then the blast, that all this while  
Slumber'd by a freezing fountain,  
Burst out rudely, like a prince  
From a midnight revel rushing,  
In his train a thousand airs,  
Each ambitious of his guilt,  
Each as cruel, cold and wild,  
Each as rugged, chill and stark,  
Hurtled round their leader crushing  
All the fretwork of the dark ;  
Frosty palace, turret and tower,  
Mosque and arabesque, mist-built  
By winter-fairies. Then, grown gross  
With the licence of the hour,  
They smote the mother and the child !  
Dark night grew darker, not a smile

Came from one star. The moon long since  
Had sunk behind the mountain.  
At the mirkest somewhat stirred  
The sere leaves, where the mother sate ;  
For a moment the babe cried,  
Something in the silence sigh'd,  
And the night was still. Oh fate !  
What hadst thou done ? Oh that hard sight  
Which morn must see ! When Winter went  
About the earth at dawn, he rent  
His locks in pain, and cast grey hairs  
Upon it as he past. So when  
Maids, poor mother, wail thy lot—  
Mournful at the close of day—  
By that legendary spot  
Oft they tell us, weeping, how  
Hoar frost lay on thy pale brow  
When they found thee, and was not  
Paler than the clay.

*A Minstrel.* A grievous tale !

*The Monk.* Where's he that dares to say so ?  
Liar ! thou art not grieved. Any vile Austrian  
May serve thy sister so to-morrow night,  
And he that wears the longest sword among ye  
Shall fear to draw it !

*A young Minstrel.* Here's my blade ! Show me  
The bloodless German !

*The Monk.* Youth ! respect thy master !

Dost thou talk treason? What, boy, if the German  
Be bloodless? He hath blood enough to rule thee!  
Tut! sheath thy maiden sword—leave pantomime  
To puppets—I but said thou art not grieved.  
And I said well. Such thews as thine being grieved  
Ne'er yet were idlers. Tut, tut, man, be grateful,  
Thine owner feeds thee well. I never saw  
A sleeker slave.

*The Minstrel.* Slave!

*President.* Friends, friends, friends, I pray you,  
Silence. Benvolio's song!

*A Minstrel.* I have a fancy  
About a rose; sung on the morn I saw  
My mother's first grey hair. Let your harsh thoughts  
Breathe gently on it—it is *overblown*.

Oh maiden! touch gently the rose overblown,  
And think of the mother thy childhood hath known;  
Smile not on the buds that exult from her stem,  
Lest her pallor grow paler that thou lovest them.  
From their beauties, oh maid, each bright butterfly chase,  
'Till his duties are paid to that dew-faded face,  
And forbid the gay bee one deceitful sweet tone,  
Till his vows are all said to the rose overblown.  
Sorrow, oh maid, is more grateful than bliss,  
Rosebuds were made for the light breeze to kiss.  
And woo how thou wilt in the soft hope to see  
Some bright bursting blossom that blooms but for thee,

Weep thy fond wish, thou shalt look up to find  
Thy tears worn as gems to beguile the next wind.  
Turn then thine eyes to the rose overblown,  
Speak of its place in a tremulous tone,  
Sigh to its leaves as they fall one by one,  
And think how the young hopes the heart used to own  
Are all shedding fast—like the rose overblown.  
Yes, turn in thy gloom to the rose overblown,  
Reverently gather each leaf that hath gone,  
Watch every canker and wail every streak,  
As thou countest the lines on thy mother's dim cheek ;  
Twilight by twilight, and day after day,  
Keep sweet attendance on sweeter decay.  
When all is over weep tears—two or three—  
And perchance long years hence, when the grass grows  
    o'er thee,  
Fond fragrant tribute to days long by-gone,  
Shall be shed on thy grave by some rose overblown.

*The Monk.*

We are a wealthy people

In all the faculties of woe. We have  
Our sighs for roses, elegies for sparrows,  
And seas of salt tears for deceased gold-fish ;  
We eat our pet lambs in a mourning robe,  
And bury gamecocks with ' the point of war.'  
And since we weep no tears for *thee*, my country,  
It needs must be thou hast deserved thy death.  
Rome, Rome ! I was deceived ; I thought thee murder'd.  
Ay, foully, foully murder'd !

*A Minstrel.*                   Thou hast thought  
Well.

*Others.* Bravo, Pietro !

*Others.* Hear him !

*The Monk.* This is treason.

A priest, I cannot hear my sovereign slander'd !  
One word more, I denounce you !

*The President.* Friends, attend !  
Silence !

Vicenzo, venerable brother,  
Methinks I heard thy harp. Its youthful strings  
Sound to me through the music of those years,  
Those threescore years, since first we play'd together,  
As the dear voice of a beloved girl,  
In virgin throng of louder choristers,  
While all the troop contend before the ear,  
Passeth alone and free to the hid heart.  
Dreaming of youth doth make me young again !  
Friend, thou hast been a man of grief, and though  
My dream of thy first music be a dream,  
Thy sounds to-day are sweeter. Such a touch  
Hath gracious wisdom. The great harmony  
Of a most sad sweet life hath been play'd out  
Upon those strings, and sympathetic chords  
Repeat it. Holy brother, there are some  
In this good company who know thee not.  
Forego the privilege of years, and lift,  
A moment, all the mantle from thine heart.

Our eyes are blind with noonday, and our brows  
 Ache with the tropics. Let us with chaste awe  
 Stand in the mellow evening of thy voice,  
 Before the old man's soul—the rayless sun  
 Seen through the mist of sorrows.

Thanks, dear brother,  
 That strain replies. I hear it, like a chime  
 To vespers.

*Vicenzo.* Friend, why is thy speech of 'brothers?'  
 My brother died. I heard last night, in the dark,  
 How the first Christians spake to one who went  
 Where I shall soon behold him.

*Some.* Good Vincenzo!

*Others.* Hear!

*Others.* Hear Vincenzo.

*Vicenzo.* Clamorous sirs, you are wise.  
 Give your praise now. You will need all your silence  
 When I have sung. The men of whom I speak  
 Lived by the prime tradition, ere the hands  
 Of ages soil'd it, or the guilt that shrunk  
 Before that bare intolerable witness  
 Bound it in gems and purple. Sirs, my lay  
 Is simple as their faith.

[*He sings.*

Brother, there is a vacant spot within our holy band,  
 And poorer is our earthly lot by one strong heart and  
 hand.

Yet, brother, it were ill to weep, when life hath been so  
drear,

That we are left alone to keep its painful vigil here.

'Twere ill if thou hast trod the way to count the labouring  
hours,

Or mourn that sorrow fill'd thy cup with hastier hand than  
ours.

Sleep softly by thy bending tree, till death's long sleep be  
o'er,

That thou canst not remember, we remember thee the  
more.

Sleep softly,—that thine heart hath pass'd through all  
death's deep distress,

To such calm rest as now thou hast, shall make us dread  
it less.

Sleep softly, brother, sleep. But oh, if there are hopes  
more blest

Than sleep, where seasons come and go about a dream-  
less rest ;

If we may deem this grave a shrine which summer rites  
observe,

Where autumn pours the votive wine, and white-robed  
winters serve ;

If we may think that those who now sit side by side with  
God,

Have sent for thee to ask thee how we tread the path they  
trod ;

Oh, brother, if it be not sin when God hath broke the  
chain

Of earthly thought, to bind thee in its fever'd links again,  
This much of all that earth did know, and all that life hath  
given,

The sadness of our love below bequeathes thy bliss in  
heaven ;

Remember what the bounden bear, though thou for aye  
art free,

And speak of us as kindly there, as here we think of thee.

*The Monk.* 'Remember what the bounden bear !'

Old man,

We cannot sing this song. There may be lands

Where chains are heavy. Here in Italy

We wear them as the draught-ox wears his bells—

*One.* Priest !

*The Monk.* Hark that martial strain ! Ye Gods, do all  
Dead tongues cry out at once ?

*A Minstrel.*

You Romans ! see

The vision of Quirinus !

*The Monk.*

Ha, ha, ha !

*The Minstrel (sings).* Who shall say what thoughts of  
glory life's mean paths unhonour'd tread,

Like those rays of distant suns, that pass us, viewless,  
overhead ?

For the heaviest heart that sleepeth hath its heavy sleep-  
ing dream,

Like the dull light on the ripple of a duller twilight stream ;



But, oh poet, if the dullard hath a soul beyond thy ken,  
Who shall paint the hero's vision, who among the sons of  
men ?  
Who shall paint him, wrapt and lonely, when the god  
within him speaks,  
And the passing skirts of Fate smite the blood into his  
cheeks ;  
When the future on the ocean of his great soul hangs like  
night,  
And some hull of thought comes ploughing all its midseas  
into light ?  
Who shall paint him leaning on the Present, standing on  
the Past,  
Gazing o'er the furthest Future deep into the stormy  
*Last* ;  
Gazing where on the remotest verge the nether mists are  
riven,—  
A giant with an oak-tree staff, looking from sea-sands to  
heaven ? *[Interlude of music.]*  
One dull day of indolence, the new-thatch'd city being all  
built,  
On his sheath'd sword bent Quirinus, with his hand upon  
the hilt.  
Round the sun's hid place on high all the stolid heaven  
was dead,  
All the flat-floor'd earth below him look'd a temple domed  
with lead ;

.

Not a voice from all the forests ! not a beam from all the  
floods !

Sadder for that early autumn, like cold sunshine, lit the  
woods.

Far, the arms of Latian hills held on high a city of power :  
With the eye of lust Quirinus burnt its beauties tower by  
tower,

Till the conscious Latian hills, jealous of the conqueror's  
mien,

Proudly drew the mists of morning, decent, round the  
ravish'd scene.

Waking from the imperial dream, said Quirinus, looking  
towards Rome,

‘So the mist of time descending hides me from the years  
to come !’

Near, below, a rushing torrent its long dance of beauty  
led,

And a forest-beast of grandeur cross'd it with a stately  
tread ;

Golden ran the rapid river gleaming though the skies were  
cold,

Far into the Sabine distance, mantling with its sands of  
gold.

Said Quirinus, sad, but proudly, gazing with a look  
sublime,

‘Gods ! so fording life, would I send golden sands down  
streams of time !’

He look'd up to heaven, and he look'd down upon the  
river strand :  
Smiling through the crystal water, shining lay the un-  
troubled sand.  
Said Quirinus, proud, but sadly, gazing upon frith and  
firth,  
' Gods ! so shall the tide of ages raise my footsteps from  
the earth !'  
Sat the sun in his pavilion ; the dark drapery, stern and  
even,  
Hanging earthward. Before noon the west winds dancing  
through high heaven,  
Fill'd with sudden mirth, drew back the giant folds with  
hands profane ;  
Pleased he saw the earth, and like a young hot prince  
began to reign.  
All this while Quirinus bent heroic eyes that could not  
weep,  
On a tear of dew that lay dull amid the grass asleep ;  
Even while he gazed a sunbeam, slanting from its radiant  
path,  
Dipt into the dew, and came forth like a goddess from the  
bath.  
Then Quirinus—'That such lot were mine, ye arbiters  
afar !  
Gods ! ye touch the sleeping water and it wakens to a  
star !'

While he looks the sun is higher, while he looks the star  
grows old,

While he looks, the dews are lying, as the dews lie, dead  
and cold.

Then Quirinus—all the hero looking sadness while he  
said,

‘ Gods ! so shall the sun of glory one day leave me cold  
and dead ! ’

Then he gazed, as heroes gaze, upon whom,—conscious,  
—earth and skies

Seem gazing back. To their live silence all his living soul  
replies,

‘ Thou who knowest me, whom thus I know,—Eternal as  
thou art,

Oh thou visible ! how is it with me in thy silent heart ? ’

Then the rock beside him crumbled in the noon-heat stone  
by stone,

‘ Gods ! the very earth may rot ere a fame like mine be  
grown ! ’

Then a salt wind—like a sea-ghost sick of land—faint  
voices bore,

‘ Gods ! but ’ once to hear the ages booming on the future  
shore ! ’

Then he look’d the sun in the face, like an eagle in his  
death-sorrow.

‘ Gods ! the very stars themselves are nearer to us than  
to-morrow ! ’

Then in rapture, all the godhead of his line about his  
brow—

‘ Mother ! Dionæan Mother ! that the years to come were  
*now !* ’

Soft Idalian incense laid him languid on the amorous sod.  
At the softest a great thunder shook the mountain like a  
god.

Starting from the Paphian trance, the hero leap’d in the  
sunlight,

All his sudden soul o’erlooking the dull sense of mortal  
sight ;

Staring, staring in the air, high over the Roman town,  
Staring, staring pale and deadly where the future years  
came down.

Dost thou see them, as I see them, like a great mist sink-  
ing slow,

With the unborn dead o’er-pictured, and the things that  
shall be ? Lo,

Woes that throw no shade on joy ; joys that shed no light  
on woe,

Flush’d with being yet to be, full of soul that makes no  
sign,

Tarquin chaste beside Lucretia, Tullius mute by Catiline.

Dost thou see them, as I see them, like a haze upon the  
sky,

Painted with dumb agonies, and woes that neither strive  
nor cry ;  
Spell-bound victors unpursuing, routed hosts that do not  
fly ;  
Lifeless in the form of life, with ineffectual grandeur great,  
As the foemen, Good and Ill, twin-slumber in the womb  
of Fate ?

Dost thou see them, as I see them, dread as when the  
demon of rain  
From cloudland verge shakes out a veil of storms across  
the lower plain ?  
Dost thou see them, wider, wider, from the mountains to  
the main,  
Peopling, peopling either heaven, till troubled with the  
infinite sight,  
Both horizons flush'd at once attest them in distemper'd  
light ? *[Interlude of music.]*

Dost thou see them, as I see them, like a great mist sink-  
ing slow,  
From the everlasting height, floating in celestial show,  
Silent, vast, like heaven unroll'd, to the eternal hills  
below ?

Lo ! they touch the earth. Ye Gods ! are mine eye-balls  
crazed with wine ?  
Shock of life, like midnight lightning, shouts along the  
leaping line.

Lo ! the children of the ages on the fields of fame beneath,  
Each in clamour springs from sleep as one day he shall  
spring from death.

Gods ! that cry of startled being ! Gods ! that din of life sublime,

Each convulsive form begins the many-colour'd work of time,

Each in agony of action flashes through his frenzied part,  
As in deadly moments years of life gleam through the heaving heart,

Gods ! I shall go wild with sight ! Whirling arms and lambent eyes,

Raging, clash in sounds that mock the sadder surge of shrieks and sighs ;

Each assumes the sudden future, each in turn defied defies,

Stream in air the Sabine tresses, Brutus strikes and Cæsar  
Cries !

So some host of rayless meteors smite our air, and mad with might,

Burst in storms of stars, and charge in flaming legions through the night.

All this while Quirinus stood, wrapt as the Python, grand as Jove,

His face a microcosm, wherein the passions of the ages strove.

Downward, downward, solemn and slow, the dreamy  
pageant dim descends,  
A man's height upward life,—no more. In heaven the  
dead, on earth the fiends.  
Downward, downward, till the valley, line unconscious  
line succeeds,  
Mingling yet a moment lifeless with the life that strives  
and bleeds.  
See the insatiate plain engulf! See the still renew'd array,  
Touching earth, explode with life, and hurtling sink out  
of the day.  
Gods! the tapestries of heaven o'erwrought with fate,  
majestic, fell,  
And burnt upon the earth, and dropt their flaming frag-  
ments into hell!  
See on high incessant hosts, to where the heavenly vistas  
close,  
And the very height of heights with a higher advent glows,  
Dyed with change : as I have seen when wild meridian  
moons are bright,  
Stormy dreams of rainbows colour all the troubled soul  
of night.  
See below exhaustless life—hark the still-renewing roar  
Of successive being kindling from the mountains to the  
shore!  
Tumult as of full-grown nations starting into crashing birth;  
Tumult, tumult, wide as heaven, wild along the rocking  
earth;



Tumult, tumult, from the dizzy maddening mounts' distracted crowd,

Peeling out till both horizons own it like a bloody cloud !  
With such flame and thunder, in the Gallic madman's vision dark,

So the ordnance of the world, drawn up, might hail the  
Omniarch !

All this while Quirinus stood, gazing with a wilder gaze,  
Heaving with a Delphic fury, shouting to the coming days !  
Warm'd into the gait of time, he springs before the march  
of things,

Imperial with an age of empire, royal with a world of  
kings !

Stand, Quirinus! Hold thine own ! Reel not, giant  
drunk with power !

Did no demigod come down to stay thee in that desperate  
hour,

When fortune blew her loudest blast, and, mindful of the  
ills in store,

Play'd a flourish ere she changed her awful stop for ever-  
more ;

And Rome, upon the hill of fame, above whose height  
the thunderer nods,

Culminated like a globe, and paused before the gasping  
gods,

Awhile in dreadful poise. One moment suns smiled on  
it dark and cold,

And lit a star. It shone. And then (like that tremend-  
ous stone of old)

Recoiling to infernal depths shook heaven, down-whirling  
as it fell,

Through red storms of molten glories lash'd up from the  
soil of hell !

How shalt *thou* behold that hour? for ah ! the generous  
and the brave

Spring upon the surge of fate, but ebb not with the ebbing  
wave.

In that hour the Dionæan caught him up to heaven ; that  
he

Beholding as a god beholdeth, seeing, might survive to  
see !

*The Monk (stepping forward).* Ye spell-bound men,  
Who stand and stare each other in the face  
As though it were an auspice, do you dare  
Behold on earth what your translated Sire  
Saw from the heavens? Didst thou not even there,  
Oh hero! with thy strong humanities  
Startle the impassive Gods ; with mortal cries  
Stir the still air of immortality,  
And with thine earthly faculty of tears  
Distain the empyrean ?

[*Silence. They whisper among themselves.*

*President.* Sir, and brother,  
Show us this vision.

*The Monk.* Doth the heart speak there ?  
Wot you there have been sights ere now which turn'd  
The seer into stone? There have been words

Which made graves tenantless, and hunt the dead  
Shrieking through hell. There have been tongues that  
smote

The lazy air wherein the gnat did dance,  
And it hath dropp'd down molten on a soul,  
And branded it for ever. You know this,  
And you will hear?

*A Shout.* And we will hear !

*The Monk.* Your blood

Be on your heads !

*A Shout.* Be on our heads and thine !

*The Monk.* And mine. If ye be brothers, I shall  
die

With you, and if not, by you. Death is death.

[*He is silent.*]

*The President (after awhile).* My brother, we attend  
thee.

*The Monk.* You will hear me?

You will behold? I do beseech that man  
Who owns a faint heart, friends, to bear it forth  
Beyond your patriot circle ; half a bowshot  
Will save him. I shall speak low. By the gods,  
It should be sung in whispers.

What ! not one ?

What ! you draw nearer? Be not rash, my brothers,  
Those Cretan mazes that outlie the heart  
Can no man tread so swiftly. I shall pause.

[*He is silent—then continues.*]

It is a fearful thing to stand in the path  
Of destiny. Here on this bridge am I,  
And you, poor souls, upon the fateful bank  
Roam up and down, and cast your wistful eyes  
To the Cimmerian shores, whose twilight reign  
Your sense, acclimated to Acheron,  
Mistakes for day. I hold ye back, poor shades,  
And with a right hand blister'd with the flames,  
Point to a way of fire. You cannot see  
The Elysian fields beyond it, and what god  
Commands you to believe me?

My poor brothers,

Pass.

*Some.* This is madness !

*Some.* Hush ! behold him.

*Others.* Wake,

Dreamer !

*The Monk.* I can see nothing in the heaven  
Or earth why next year should be worse than this ;  
I do not learn from any sign in the sky  
That you shall dance less lightly at the fair,  
Or drink your pottle weaker at the wake,  
Or find the wench less willing at the wedding,  
Or sing less often in the castle hall,  
Or think the rich man's nod a poorer fee,  
Or sit less thankful at the menial's fare,  
Or rear one chubby slave the less or more,

Or share their mother on worse usury

With yonder German——

*Some.*

Shame——

*Others.*

Hold !

*Others.*

Are we clowns?

*Others.* Peace. Hear him out—hear the priest out.

Down with him.

Hear him. Hear, hear, hear, hear him out. Down with him.

*The Monk.* 'Tis a hard fate. As yet you are not guilty ;

As yet the dull Maremma of the future  
From the mephitic stagnance of the past  
Stretches as unforbidden. But hear me,  
And the Egyptian curse turns it to blood !  
Yet you might tread it—with the march of life  
Stir the pestiferous slime of days, till weak  
Or sturdy vitals, soon or late, drop each  
In his appointed hole. Why should I speak ?  
Friends, 'tis a fearful time. As yet your eyes  
Have not been open'd to know good from evil.  
The dread of the great hour before the fall  
Gathers upon my soul. Now must I do  
The miracle which paints the universe.  
You stand before me here all men, all brothers,  
And I must give you sight. And, seeing, he  
Who is not straight transfigured to a saint,

Must blacken to a fiend. This is that water  
That rots the adulteress—dare ye drink?

*Some.*

Now mercy!

*Others.* Ay, ay, ay, to the dregs.

*Others.*

Pour, priest, pour, pour.

*One.* S'death! do you mock us? Speak!

*The Monk.*

I pray you, patience,

I pray you, patience. These are times, my brothers,  
When the grand Roman habit is a dress  
For no man's masquerade. [*They continue to shout.*]

Beseech you, patience,

Patience, sweet friends! The cap of liberty  
Is not a carnival wear. There are laws, friends,—  
You have not read them—they are writ in German,  
But they are laws. And by the laws the blush  
Of shame is disaffected and forbidden,  
The proud tears of a patriot are not loyal,  
The thoughts of good men are against the statute;  
Who would speak like a freeman must content him  
To walk a chain or two more like a slave.  
I break no laws. I tell you by the laws  
To inherit from your sires is robbery,  
To think what you are thinking is rebellion,  
To take the counsel of the brave is treason,  
To strike a despot on his throne is death.  
I do entreat you, friends, obey the laws!  
If you were heroes I must hold my peace.  
I should have sinn'd already. By the laws

You should not see this sight if you were heroes ;  
But slaves ! behold !

[*The Monk sings.*

Some sad slow strain—  
Deep wails and plaintive pain,  
With thy most sorrowy soul, my harp, remember !  
Hie where in some lone spot,  
By the cold hearth of a forsaken cot,  
A dying orphan cowers by the last ember !

To some unseen green space  
Of a deserted place,  
Where the pale grass and the lorn flowers are holy ;  
And of remorseless wrong,  
In mournful gusts and long,  
Winds cry at eve, where the betray'd lies lowly :

And with them, as they float—  
The wail and the wind note—  
Thy woes most sweet bewildermments entwine ;  
And, harp ! thou hast not found  
One desolate sad sound  
That does not ring like laughter on a grief like mine.

My harp ! how oft, when cold  
And worn with cares untold,  
With hearts untrue, stern looks, and sunless brows,  
Thy first sweet breath that stole  
Stirr'd incense in my soul,  
Like the south wind among the myrtle boughs.

But there are in our lot  
Thoughts where earth's sounds come not—  
Like the eternal calm of the mid-seas—  
And all that might have been  
And all that is,—oh Queen  
Of minstrelsy, thou hast no voice for these.

I hear, soul-wrapt, thy song  
In stirring notes and strong,  
High wandering in the years for ever flown ;  
To my exulting sight  
The gorgeous Past comes bright !  
In the broad earth too poor for her renown,  
ITALIA, great and wise,  
Sits, and to golden skies  
Lifts the grand brow which clouds contend to crown.

But, oh ! if in that hour  
Of calm unchallenged power,  
Some vision of prescient fate supreme  
Forewarn her in mid-pride  
Of all that must betide,  
Who, who may sing the anguish of that dream ?  
Thy straining strings should start  
As breaks her bursting heart,  
And all thy broken chords confess the unconquer'd theme !



Return, my harp, return  
Beside this broken urn,  
Count the long days low lying where it lies ;  
Have all thy wandering will !  
With fitful fancies fill  
Long interludes of ill !  
With sweeping blasts and strange unearthly cries,  
Swift laughter, hurrying fears,  
Madness, and joys, and tears,  
And every mood that wayward wildness tries,  
These are the wingèd years !  
'They pass. And where is she whose greatness claims  
the skies ?

Behold her ! wan and fair,  
Her pale arm soil'd and bare,  
That trembles in the intolerable chain—  
Behold the woes that rise  
To her undying eyes,  
Too proud to faint and too imperial to complain ;  
Behold her bend and grieve  
From shameful morn to eve,  
And till, with captive hands, the graves that hide her  
Slain !

Behold the toil that lives  
And strives, and sinks and strives !  
Her outraged looks to every heaven address !

Her pride, grown fierce by fate,  
Her mien deject and great,  
Her violated bosom's wild unrest;  
Behold her—travail-torn—  
Endured but still unborne  
Behold what fetters load her queenly breast.

Behold the glittering cares  
Her brow, in mockery, wears,  
The crowns of thorn and tinsel, tear-empair'd;  
Hark the unwonted names  
That consummate her shames!  
They dare not call her ROME—no, not down hurl'd  
And chain'd!—lest at the sound  
Each Vandal bond they bound  
Fall from her and confess the empress of the world!

•

Thus with untiring plaint  
How oft thy fancies paint  
Each changing mood of her unchanging woe.  
Before my sadden'd eyes  
Obedient dolours rise,  
A thousand subject passions pale and glow!  
And each new wrong she bears  
Thou actest in mine ears,  
And ill complains to ill, and blow resounds to blow!

But what shall paint the power  
Of that disastrous hour,  
When coarse oppression struck with ruder hand,  
And, at some worst disgrace,  
She raised her bleeding face,  
And saw with folded arms her sons consenting stand?

My harp! at that last gaze  
Her eyes, dishonoured, raise,  
Thou, with Timanthean woe grown utterless,  
Changing the unequal key  
Of slaves that might be free,  
But rot and smile in unavenged duress,  
Thy descant of disdain  
Loud liftest, till our pain  
Shows us the shade of *her* ineffable distress.

Then the mists are breaking!  
Then our hearts are waking!  
We call her 'mother'! and she answers! Then  
The blood that won these plains  
Boils in our modern veins,  
Years are unlived! Italia! once again,  
Where thy proud eagles shine  
All Roman, and all thine,  
We rise and—bah! I dream'd that we were men!  
[*Great confusion and outcry; in the midst of which the*  
*MONK disappears.*]

## SCENE VIII.

## A DUNGEON.

*The Monk, VITTORIO SANTO, and a few of his chosen followers (among them 'The Mother' of SCENE VI.) who are admitted to see him for the last time. They are conversing. His trial, by Austrian Court-martial, takes place at day-break.*

*The Monk.* I grant you there must be for every man  
Some hill, plain, valley, or familiar tree,  
Beside whose sweetness his young soul beholding,  
Grew till the invisible within put on  
The outward beauty. As your Roman mothers  
Conceiving gazed upon their marble gods,  
And brought forth sons like them. But if these homesteads  
Contain that wealth of utterless affections,  
Hopes, fears, traditions, duties, memories,  
Inborn respects, instincts of good and evil,  
That creature faith, that visible religion,  
Which my soul utters when I say 'My country,'  
Then the best sight makes the best citizen,  
The horizon of our rights shuts in with age,  
Each day of weeping leaves us less to weep for,  
Infirmity makes outlaws, and the blind  
Are aliens everywhere.

*A Youth.* Belovèd master,  
For thus—sublime in the near neighbourhood  
Of death—I must behold thee, even as men  
On hill-tops seen against the heaven beyond  
Seem giants——

*The Monk.* Friend, forbear. Who made me ruler  
And judge among you—or who gave thee licence  
To be a slave? Beloved, thou art young: the time  
May come when thou shalt tremble to create  
Or to depose a master. In dominion—  
The universal idol—the world worships  
The unknown God. Sometimes in these last hours  
I have had visions of a more divine  
Iconoclast, who shall demand, ‘Will God  
Be worshipp’d in the noblest image?’ Let  
That pass. I feel it has not pass’d for ever.  
Meanwhile learn this. Drawing near authority  
To make or to unmake—Man, put thy shoes  
From off thy feet, for the place where thou standest  
Is holy ground.

*A Friend.* Who then shall dare rebel?

*The Monk.* Well ask’d, brave patriot, where is that  
blasphemer

Who dares rebel? Let us obey. But, Roman,  
Shall we obey the living or the dead?  
‘The powers that be!’ By what sign will ye know  
The *powers* that be? My friends, we are the fools  
Of eyesight and the earthly habitudes

Which cannot look aloft. Walking the plank  
Of life o'er the abyss, we fear to glance  
Or upward to the stars, or downward to the grave.  
Our souls, yoke-strain'd, in attitude of toil  
Bend earthward. Oft the *un*worshipp'd angel passeth  
While we, with eyes fix'd on the ground from which  
We came, adore his footsteps in the sand.  
And God, this while, is in the heaven of heavens !  
Stand ! Christian ! thou who hastest towards a throne  
By that old pathway which our fathers wore  
When a *king* sat there. Traitor ! yon blood-stain'd  
Mad sans-culotte, whose godless feet are rattling  
Among kings' bones,—yon vulture of the nations,  
Yelling instinctive through the fateful air  
To deathstruck dynasties,—yon maniac serf  
Ringing his broken chains, and piling, wild  
With freedom, hills of courtly slain to reach  
The thronèd effigy to which thou kneelest,  
And strew the imperial tatters to the wind—  
That outlaw is no *rebel* ! What art *thou*  
Who bendest to the empty rags which once  
Enrobed dominion, and with stiff knee passest  
That uncrown'd presence, unbegilt, unfeather'd  
Naked and full of God, whose step disturbs  
The centre of the world ?

Friends ! Gessler's hat  
Two centuries hence had more divinity  
Than any crown to-day. Is aught on earth

Eternal? Man has rights ; but is a corpse  
A man? Doth the heir rob the dead? The stars  
Themselves burn out. Spring, summer, autumn, winter,  
Each traitor to the past, and each in turn  
To its own season loyal. Are these things  
Dumb? Look on high. That which you call *rebellion*  
Is but the changed obedience which we pay  
To changing dispensations. The true rebel  
Is he who worships for the powers *that are*  
Powers *that are not*.

*Enter a Jailor secretly disposed to favour the Monk.*

*Jailor.* The hour, most reverend Sir,  
Of which you bade me warn you, struck but now.  
One more is all the grace I dare. Even that  
Discover'd, would be bought with all my own.

*The Monk.* Good friend, we thank thee. Did we  
not know, jailor,  
That the time cometh when to have done this service  
To these and me this night shall more avail thee  
Than an imperial signet, we would speak  
Of recompence. Yet wear this, [*taking a ring from his*  
*finger,*] and forget not  
When it was given and why. Enough. We count  
The moments.

Gentle Romans, when ye enter  
The land of milk and honey, recollect  
That God spared Rahab. The great day of reckoning

Is not so far hence that ye shall forget  
Vittorio Santo's keeper.

*A Friend.*

Show me why

It does not dawn to-morrow. 'T may suit well  
Thy monk's disguise to draw the sword of the Spirit,  
And wrestle not with flesh and blood, but hath  
Rome one arm only? How shall he whose tongue  
Fate hung awry be eloquent? My comrades,  
*Thus!* [*with a gesture*]. In truth, Santo, my right worthy  
friend,

Methinks thou hast even offer'd up thyself  
And thy good cause on a cold altar——

*The Monk.*

So

Did Abel.

*The Friend.* Yes, 'tis well, 'tis very well,

Noble no doubt and wondrous heavenly, but——

*An elder Friend.* Peace, stripling! Friend revered,  
thou hast wrought out

Thy chosen path to freedom. It ends here.

*The Monk* (*pointing up*). THERE. I am no such  
royal guest, dear Cosmo,

But I can stand a moment at the gate.

*Cosmo.* We, reverent of thy martyr zeal, but hearing  
A voice which calls us by a shorter road  
To be cut out by hands, ask if the sword  
That patriot draws be guilty?

*The Monk.*

When the Baptist

Call'd to repentance, did he weigh the dust



And measure out the sackcloth ? Let a prophet  
Wait upon silence. Who can hold his peace  
Hath said his message. Things that once have dwelt  
In heaven will make that prison, a man's heart,  
Glad to release them. Let the seer see  
And he will cry. Herein I have not seen.  
The image that for me fills earth and heaven  
Shuts out the shapes beyond.

*A Woman* ('*The Mother*' in *Scene VI.*) Yet, father,  
—oh

Let me still call thee so !—are there not hard  
Unripen'd times, when the gold sickle of angels  
Reaps not the harvest—early dawns of truth,  
When we must burn a grosser light than day ?

*The Monk.* If the true man were of the world, and  
had

The sun of his great orbit in its centre,  
And kept the measure of its seasons, then,  
Daughter, thou hadst said well. But he who steps  
Forth from the radiant chambers of the future  
To show us how the unseen ages look ;  
He who comes forth a voluntary hostage  
Of the supreme good-will of times to come ;  
He who grew up among your children's children,  
And calls by name the years you never knew ;  
He who takes counsel of the things that yet  
Are not, and answers with his kindling eyes  
Questions ye cannot hear ; he who is set

Among us pigmies, with a heavenlier stature  
And brighter face than ours, that we must leap  
Even to smite it,—that man, friends, must have  
The self-existence of a god. From him  
The poor necessities, hopes, fears, and fashions  
Of the expedient Present, fall like waves  
From adamant. Friends ! learn a prophet's patience.  
Do you remember how, in backward years,  
Night after night the patient harvest-moon  
Climbs her high seat above the silent fields,  
In act to reign ? Bating no majesty  
For her great solitude. Unmann'd, below,  
The golden plenty spreads, unwarn'd of change,  
Ample repose. From corn-crown'd hill to hill,  
From waving slope to slope, where sickly winds  
Disturb'd flit blind from sudden sleep to sleep,  
From calm auriferous deeps and from the broad  
Pale distance, drowsy in the genial light,  
From all the dull expanse of voiceless plains,  
O'er which, unscared, the midnight curlew cries,  
No answering horn salutes her. Smile on, pale,  
Prophetic queen ! Know ere thy wane, thine hosts,  
Thy sounding hosts, shall darken all the vales !  
Not otherwise the poet and the prophet,  
The patriot and the sage.

*The Youth.*

This is well said.

And if we desperate men had calm or leisure  
To seek the fruit of knowledge where it hangs

Through all the fair wide gardens of the soul,  
Doubtless 'twere reverend idlesse. But, good Sir,  
A partisan in war time must needs carry  
His daily meed of duty in his hand.

We have no time—we freemen——

*The Monk.*

Ah, young friend,

Dost *thou* too die to-morrow ?

*Gonzalo (a friend).*

Noble Sir,

Forgive him !

*The Monk.* He spake not amiss, Gonzalo,  
A little out of tune, no more. I thank him.  
And if I could dismiss you from this last  
Communion, with no ampler utterance  
Than yet hath pass'd between us ; if I left you  
Here upon earth, and with the clouds above,  
To the dim sayings of the sibylline stars,  
And now, at midnight, gave your tear-blind eyes  
No compass but the land-marks, which serve angels  
Journeying heaven and earth, Rezzio's rebuke  
Flying before would shut against my soul  
The gates of paradise. I have come short  
Of my high calling, friends, but (I thank God)  
Not thus far. The old Castellan, just now,  
Came not unbidden. I desired, my brethren,  
To ask of you, this our last mutual hour,  
A death gift,—if you like it—laid upon  
My funeral pile. Somewhat I had to say.

*A Friend (aside).* Son.

*The Son (aside).* Father.

*The Friend (aside).* Mine own chaplain—hasten——

*The Monk (observing them).* Marquis,

Are we such strangers? Sirs, ye do me wrong.  
What chrysm can hold, what hand of flesh can spread  
The unction of a soul? I bear in me  
The priesthood of a Christian man, and do  
My own death-rites. What sins I have, are written  
On high : and that angelic record needs  
No death-bed supplement. Son ! let us brighten  
This last best hour with thoughts that shining through  
To-morrow's tears shall set in our worst cloud  
The bow of promise. In my life, long past,  
There is a passage, friends, which set apart  
From our rich confidence, I have reserved  
As burden for this hour. Ye are just, brethren,  
And will believe me that I dig this dust  
Of personal remembrance as the sands  
Of golden shores. In giving you the wisdom  
Which I received, and now commit to your  
Chaste hands, with prayers ye may be better stewards,  
I wish, if I may speak thus, to transplant,  
Not the fruit only, but the tree whereon  
It grew ; that so they may have life in you,  
Unto a goodlier increase. And for this  
Awful and mystic husbandry I chose  
The climate of the grave. And if, dear friends,  
I stray some moments from my history,

Through the sideways of sterile circumstance,  
Be gracious to the old man garrulous.  
The *old man*, friends. Age is the shadow of death,  
Cast where he standeth in the radiant path  
Of each man's immortality. What age,  
To the dumb infant of eternity,  
Bring threescore years and ten? Brother Gonzalo,  
Prithee that prison water-jar. My lips  
Are feverish with to-morrow. [*He drinks.*

Wells the spring  
Pure even here? Oh nature, nature, thou  
Hast done thy part! Thanks, gentle friends.  
Now, soul,  
I turn thee loose among the fields of old. [*He pauses.*

Imperial Summer in hot luxury  
Reign'd like a new-crown'd caliph. Heavy Noon,  
Golden and dead-asleep, oppressive lay,  
Athwart the sated world. I, book in hand,  
Wander'd since dawn, it was my wont, those fair  
Campanian fields where ancient poets went  
To learn the fragrance of ambrosial air,  
And every nymph was Hebe—but where now,  
When the serf makes his lair where Romans dwelt,  
Nature, disdainful of the hideous trespass,  
Teaches, retributive, the wasting cheek  
How slaves should look. From early morn to eve  
My feet had roam'd these plains, my heart the ages.

And burden'd with the brightness of the hour,  
I sought the shade which old Vespasian built.  
Those walls which, lest degenerate tongues disturb  
The indignant dead, we call the Coliseum—  
Those wondrous walls which, like the monument  
Of some old city of the plague, stand up  
Mighty in strength and ruin, with no more  
Decay than serves for epitaph, and takes  
Impiety from pride, and breaks the crown'd  
Pillar of triumph on the conqueror's grave.  
Those walls whose grey infirmities seem only  
The mood of an imperishable face,  
Awful as scars upon a Titan's brow,  
Dread as a strong man's tears. Small marvel, truly,  
With that eternal witness looking on,  
That thou, Campagna ! art for very shame  
True to the days of old !

Entering, I sat

Refresh'd in shadow, and like some high wizard,  
In wayward hour, call'd with a god's caprice  
Spirits of new and old. In that doom-ring  
Of time, who would not be magician ? Now,  
I sought old chronicles for Nero's house,  
That golden crown that made mount Palatine  
Royal. And those imperial halls wherein  
Cæsar is still august. Now, pensive, sitting  
Within the very shade of destiny,  
I saw their ruins strew the hills of Rome.

And looking forth through rents, by which the years  
Pass in and out, I gazed as one should gaze  
Upon some battle-field of the old gods.  
And the Olympian slain lay there, unearth'd,  
With whitening limbs—like bark'd oaks, thunder-scarr'd,  
Loading the fearful ground, ghastly and gaunt,  
In all the dreadful attitudes of death.  
So sojourning—a pilgrim of the past—  
Kind sleep o'ertook me, travel-worn of soul.  
My eyes, unconscious, closed to scenes without,  
And at a shout I opened them within  
Upon the world of dreams. With strange recoil  
As at a nod, the extended scroll of time  
Roll'd up full fifteen ages. That Honorius  
Who cut the world in two, gave holiday  
To all the pride of Rome. The new arena,  
(For in old Rome three hundred years seem'd new,)  
Which great Vespasian, working for all time,  
Built up with Jewish hands, (as he would sweat  
Their immortality into the stone,)  
Teem'd to the parapet. The sun of noon  
Shed golden evening through a silken heaven,  
Fair floating, which for clouds received the incense  
Of all the Arabies. Luxurious art  
Ensnared the unwilling winds, and like toil'd eagles,  
Held them through all the hot Italian day,  
Flapping cool pleasures. Ever falling-waters  
Solaced the ear, themselves beheld through fragrance,

Till the lapp'd sense in soft confusion own'd  
Redolent light. Behind a hedge of gold  
In the elysian field, imperial state  
Purpled the ring. High, high, and higher rose  
The babel tower of heap'd up life, and o'er  
This strange rich arras, rainbow-hued and vast,  
The eternal marble, imminent, look'd down,  
And the cyclopean mass of the huge walls  
Frown'd from the arches. And before their stern  
And monumental grandeur, the up-piled  
Mortality was as this hand beside  
This rock-hewn dungeon. In the midst stand I,  
On that tremendous theatre condemn'd  
To play the last red scene of a short life,  
Lest Cæsar yawn. You heavens !

While I draw sword

And do the hideous courtesies of war,  
My senses, quick with fate, learn all the scene,  
And snuff, prescient, on the heavy air  
The perfumed death. My foe, a Spartacus  
In make and weapon, took with careless scorn  
The languid challenge ; and with his flat sword  
Spurn'd me to action. So have I beheld  
At the unequal pleasure of the winds,  
Some poplar giant—tyrant of the plain—  
Fall foul of some slim cypress. Point to point,  
And blade to blade, and hilt to hilt opposed,  
The glittering mazes of the gleaming glaive



Coil and recoil. The waxing strife has shrunk  
The earth to standing-ground. The whole wrapt being  
Sent hot into the hand, spares not one sense  
Beyond the sword-arm's circle. Into which  
Half-understood, the dreadful seas of clamour  
Thunder their surges. So, meseems, a soul  
Falling through mid-space hears the passing shout  
Of unseen worlds. And now the giant, stung,  
Casts off his sword craft. Striding like a storm,  
Uproots me, lightening. See my blade fly up  
Like a flung torch ; myself into the dust  
Hurl'd like a spear ; and the Goliath folding  
His untask'd arms upon his unbreathed breast,  
Look up without a flush for the well-known  
Signal of doom. Two hundred thousand hands  
Gave it. He saw. While the sword rose and fell,  
Up from the podium to the beetling height  
I turn'd one dying look to the mute nation  
Which—stretching neck and nerve with sanguine strain  
To catch the bloody joy—through all its legions  
Held such a stifled horrible expectance,  
As if the greed of anguish could not spare  
The groan a sigh might cover. Round the vast  
O'er-peopled hell the terrible haste of death  
Took my mad eyes, and, in the indistinct  
Wild glance, its serried thousands glared on me  
Like one tremendous face.

Consenting sat

That day, all that the world most loved, fear'd, wor-  
shipp'd.

Sages whose household words, caught up, made proverbs  
For far-off nations ; grey proconsuls, warriors  
Whose mere names stood for victory in all  
The tongues of Europe ; senators whose title  
Ennobled kings ; priests of all orders, bishops  
Whose heavenly treasure was not lent, as yet,  
To earthly usury ; great merchants, men  
Who dealt in kingdoms ; ruddy aruspex,  
And pale philosopher, who bent beneath  
The keys of wisdom ; artists, and whatever  
In Rome claimed to be poet ; woman, too,  
And passing fair,—not that mine eye had note  
Of any separate loveliness, or knew  
More than a sense of exquisite relief,  
A more or less in hate, an intuition  
That in the living mountain which rose round  
All was not adamant ; a milder mood  
In a most terrible destiny. I saw it,  
As when upon the fretful parapet  
Of some vast cloud that doth engird the west,  
Flush'd and distemper'd with the angry hues  
Of passionate sunset, oft at eve there shineth  
A line of purer light. All these sat there  
Consenting, and with them the purple pride  
To which all these bow'd down ;—and I must die.  
Swept through the silence a great wind of voices,

‘Look to the podium!’ Breaking from the ranks  
A Christian priest—I knew him by his habit—  
Cleaves the gold fences,—lion-proof—with more  
Than lion’s heart, and, as the sword fell, stands  
‘Twixt me and slaughter. Abdiel with such gesture  
Held Satan off. The rude barbarian, scorning  
The feeble game, flings down his sword. That moment  
Methought hell burst, and in a death-trance heard I  
The outcry of the damn’d. The observant host  
Rose like the simultaneous tide when hid  
Volcanos heave the ocean, and a long  
Vast wave engulfs an island. Not the war  
Even of those seas drowning the blasphemies  
Of shrieking sinking cities, storms the ear  
Like what I heard. Tremendous rushing life  
Yell’d round the place, and, as the howling vortex  
Belch’d up its sounds, the screaming horrors struck  
The impassive walls, and like caged fiends came back  
Convulsed with madness. Then the tempest turns  
Inwards, and with one gust, as at a sign,  
Guts the stone entrails of the awful tower  
In whirlwind of revenge. Like an explosion  
Down hails the hurricane fury. So Vesuvius  
With mountains wrench’d from her own bowels, piles  
Shouting the blasted plain.

Slain, slain and buried  
By the same act, under one terrible heap  
Lay martyr, victor, vanquish’d. Last to die

I felt the growing weight and heard through all  
The exulting thousands. How the sounds dash'd down  
Like stamping furies. Here the vision ends :  
With the death-pang I woke.

Absolute calm,

A silence like the silence of the desert,  
Silence beyond repose, lone, lifeless, stagnant,  
Muter than any grave. Silence too dead  
For living tongue to name. Silence more placid  
Than peace or night or death ; (for these are strings  
Unstruck but to be stricken ;) idiot silence,  
Sterile, and blank, and blind. A breathless pause  
In heaven and earth ; held till the moving thought  
Seems turbulence, this human nature grows  
Unseemly on us, our life's common functions  
Impertinent and gross, and conscious cheeks  
Excuse the beating heart with blushes. Silence  
As of a listening world. Such strange defect,  
Such lean and hungry quiet, such keen sense  
Of absence grown effectual, that the ear  
Faints as for breath, and even the very substance  
Of latent sound seems dead. Alas ! for language,  
We sing the healing darkness of sweet night,  
But for Egyptian darkness that was felt  
Have names no blacker. When *you* speak of silence,  
'Tis as the sweet content of voiceless woods  
After the nightingale—as the home-genius  
Sole watching by the sleep of happy babes

With finger at her lip, and shows of stillness,  
Meanwhile the sleeper smileth and the air  
Stirs with dream-music. When *I* use the word  
Think of some other silence. In that other  
I woke.

From sound to stillness as when stormy hearts  
In passion break. From tempest to dead calm,  
As when at some strange portent clashing hosts  
Halt in mid-shock. From all to nothingness,  
A soul from chaos shot into the void  
Beyond the universe.

In my short rest  
From imminent heights, the dust of slow decay—  
Sands from the glass of time shaken of winds—  
Crumbs from the feast of desolation—strew'd  
My slumbering face upturn'd. The Gorgon Sleep  
Made them a shower of stones. My wondering eyes  
O'er-charged with sense, in shuddering unbelief  
Unclose upon the lone inane expanse  
Of summer turf, from which the mouldering walls  
Shut not the sunshine ; like a green still lake  
Girt by decaying hills. Urging my gaze  
Round the tremendous circle, arch on arch,  
And pile on pile, that tired the travell'd eye,  
I saw the yawning jaws and sightless sockets  
Gape to the heedless air. Like the death's-head  
Of buried empire. And the sun shone through them  
With calm avoidance that left them more dark,

And pleased him with some small daisy's face  
Grass-grown. As though even from the carrion of gods,  
The instinct of the living universe  
Held heaven and earth aloof. All through the lorn  
Vacuity winds came and went, but stirr'd  
Only the flowers of yesterday. Upstood  
The hoar unconscious walls, bisson and bare,  
Like an old man deaf, blind, and grey, in whom  
The years of old stand in the sun and murmur  
Of childhood and the dead. From parapets  
Where the sky rests, from broken niches—each  
More than Olympus,—for gods dwelt in them,—  
Below from senatorial haunts and seats  
Imperial, where the ever-passing fates  
Wore out the stone, strange hermit birds croak'd forth  
Sorrowful sounds, like watchers on the height  
Crying the hours of ruin. When the clouds  
Dress'd every myrtle on the walls in mourning  
With calm prerogative the eternal pile  
Impassive shone with the unearthly light  
Of immortality. When conquering suns  
Triumph'd in jubilant earth, it stood out dark  
With thoughts of ages: like some mighty captive  
Upon his deathbed in a Christian land,  
And lying, through the chant of Psalm and Creed  
Unshriven and stern, with peace upon his brow,  
And on his lips strange gods.

Rank weeds and grasses,

Careless and nodding, grew, and asked no leave,  
Where Romans trembled. Where the wreck was saddest  
Sweet pensive herbs, that had been gay elsewhere,  
With conscious mien of place rose tall and still,  
And bent with duty. Like some village children  
Who found a dead king on a battle-field,  
And with decorous care and reverent pity  
Composed the lordly ruin, and sat down  
Grave without tears. At length the giant lay,  
And everywhere he was begirt with years,  
And everywhere the torn and mouldering Past  
Hung with the ivy. For Time, smit with honour  
Of what he slew, cast his own mantle on him,  
That none should mock the dead.

Oh, Solitude,

What dost thou here? Where are those legions? They  
Were men, not spirits. Where those shouts that like  
Wild waves upen a low lee shore, but now  
Lash'd me to death? Thou Earth, where didst thou  
quake

When they went down? Was it that shock, oh Earth,  
That left these ruins? Crying thus, I ponder'd  
The subject of my dream. Beside me still  
Lay that old chronicle whence, as from some  
Quaint ancient banquet-hall, a gorgeous bevy  
Of gods and men had pass'd forth with my soul  
Into sleep's stranger pleasaunce, and thence straying  
Wander'd the world. The open page, held wide

By my stretch'd slumbering arm, interpreted  
The vision. There my waking eyes had closed.  
'Twas where Honorius on a high day gives  
Games to great Rome ; and one unfriended priest,  
Telemachus by name, soul-stricken, leaps  
The circus fences, and in mid-arena  
Stays the unholy combat, and dies there,  
Stoned by the people. When he walk'd through Rome  
That morning, no man turned to gaze on him.  
He had no friend, no mistress, no disciple,  
No power, fame, fortune, wealth, or human cunning,  
And hath no record upon earth but this,  
That he died there. Yet those walls where he suffer'd—  
Those great imperial monumental walls  
Built to feast nations in for ever—stand  
From that day tenantless. In that man's blood  
Baptized to ruin. Then my heart cried out,  
Herein, oh prophet, learn a prophet's duty!  
For this cause is he born, and for this cause,  
For this cause comes he to the world—to bear  
*Witness.* Oh God-ordain'd ! thine hands are God's !  
Sully them not. The days shall come when men  
Who would be angels shall look back to see  
What thou wert. Live for them. Speak, speak thy  
message ;  
The world runs post for thee. The good by nature,  
The bad by fate ;—whom the avenging gods  
Having condemn'd have first demented. Know



By virtue of that madness they are thine.  
Lay-brothers working where the sanctity  
Of thine high office comes not. Savage friends  
Who, scattering in their wrath thy beacon, light  
The fire that clears the wilderness. Unconscious  
Disciples, writing up the martyr's title  
In Hebrew, Greek, and Latin on his cross.  
Love him who loves thee ; his sweet love hath bought  
A place in heaven. But love him more who hates,  
For he dares hell to serve thee. Pray for him  
Who hears thee gladly ; it shall be remember'd  
On high. But, martyr ! count thy debt the greater  
To the reviler ; *he* hath bought thy triumph  
With his own soul. In all thy toils forget not  
That whoso sheddeth his life's blood for thee  
Is a good lover ; but thy great apostle,  
Thy ministering spirit, thy spell-bound  
World-working giant, thy head hierophant  
And everlasting high priest, is that sinner  
Who sheds thine own.

*A Friend.*

Alas !

*Another.*

'Tis a hard saying,

Who can hear it?

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## SCENE IX.

## THE TRIAL.

*An Austrian Court-martial. A number of Officers as Judges. An empty chair for the President, who enters during the proceedings. A subordinate Officer prosecutes. Various Witnesses. A great crowd of Auditors. The Monk stands in the midst with an abstracted air, murmuring to himself.*

*Prosecutor.* The court has heard the minstrel,  
Henri de Jaloux ; the most reverend father,  
Ghiotto Ingordo ; and the rustic crowd  
Brought under guard from Milan.

Noble Sirs,

Will't please you listen to an aged witness,  
A simple man, but of a good report,  
And grey in loyalty. Codardo Goffo,  
Stand forth ! Now worthy Goffo, of what crime  
Dost thou here charge the prisoner?—

*A Fudge.*

Speak, old man !

*Old Goffo.* So please you, I was working in the  
fields ;

I serve my lord our bishop—and our bull,  
Mad with the fly—for, an it please your worships,  
Since I drove plough, which will be thirty year



And knelt to feed it; when up comes our bull,  
And down I am. Not that I think, your worships,—

*A Fudge.* Babbling old man, hear me. Answer me  
shortly

What I shall ask thee. Jailor, heat thine irons,  
And burn his tongue out if he fails. Now, sirrah,  
What of this man?

*Old Goffo.* Please you, my lord, he came—  
Not that I ever saw him till that hour—  
My lord, I am a poor old man, my lords,  
I am a very poor old man—the bishop—

*A Fudge.* Silence! the prisoner saved you? Is it  
so?

*Old Goffo.* Please you, my lord, he did, my lord—

*A Fudge.* And you?

*Old Goffo.* My lords, it was the only piece I had—  
By all the saints!—nay, pray, your worships, mercy,  
A poor old man! I meant to pay it back—  
My lord the bishop's steward that same day,  
Says he, Go buy—

*A Fudge.* Enough! you gave the prisoner  
A coin—and why?

*Old Goffo.* An offering, please your worships,  
An old man's life is sweet—I swear, my lords,  
Only an offering—nay—

*Another Fudge.* Piously done!  
Speak up, good man! The prisoner took it?

*Old Goffo.* Ah,

Sirs, that an honest man who served his bishop  
Good sixty year—nay, I might say, your worships,  
Sixty and one : at Martinmas—I mind it  
Well—I was hired. My mother—rest her soul,  
She was a mother, sirs,—she says—says she——

*A Fudge.* Jailor, your irons !

*Old Goffo.* Mercy, oh, my lords,

I will speak—mercy, oh, my lords——

*A Fudge.* Hear me.

Say yes or no. The prisoner kept your coin ?

*Old Goffo.* No, please my lord.

*A Fudge.* No, sirrah ? How ?

*Old Goffo.* Nay, mercy !

My lords, I will tell all.

*Fudge.* Peace, fool, say on.

*Old Goffo.* Please you, he flung it on the ground, and  
stamp'd it

Like any ram—my lords—as I stand here,—

And said——

*Fudge.* Ay, tell us what he said.

*Old Goffo.* My lords,

I am a very feeble poor old man,  
I pray your worships mercy—on my knees—  
My lords—my youngest girl left one small child,  
For pity's sake, my lords, remember it,—  
My youngest daughter, please your worships,—she  
Left him to me—for pity's sake, my lords,  
My lords, for pity's sake !

*A Judge.* Is there none here  
Who will interpret this strange witness ?

*Prosecutor.* Sir,  
The poor half-witted dotard fears to be  
Confounded with his benefactor. I,  
Marshalling the evidence, heard this from him,  
That when the prisoner saw the superscription  
And image of my lord the duke, he spurn'd  
The money, and declared that masses bought  
With king-stamp'd price purchased the soul for hell,  
With sundry other ravings, treating of  
Rome and Republics.

*A Judge.* I this so ?

*Old Goffo.* My lords,  
'Tis very true.

*President (who enters).* Eh—eh—why this is treason,  
Treason—eh—said he so ?—honest old man,  
Speak on—he told thee—eh—yes, yes, he told thee  
All kinds of things—eh—yes—to slay the bishop,  
Speak out—fear not—to slay the bishop—eh ?——

*Old Goffo.* My lords, as I shall answer on my soul,  
He said not so ; rather, my lords, he bade——

*President.* There, get you gone—there, get you  
gone——

*Prosecutor.* Call up  
Signor Pulito Mansueto. Now, Sir,  
What say you ?

*Mansueto.* Sir, I have a son. The son

Of my grey widowhood. To whose dear tune  
I have so play'd my life, in the dim future  
Of my old heart I own no single hope  
That has not all his features. What he was  
To me, a daughter seem'd to my rich neighbour,  
Worthy Antonio ; and wherein my son  
Fail'd of perfection's stature, it did show  
Complete in her. Antonio and I,  
Old schoolfellows—had mark'd them for each other,  
Well pleased to make our dynasties shake hands  
When we might greet no longer.

That their love  
Should have run smoothly in the golden channels  
Made by the hands that made them, Sir, what father  
Will doubt? Sirs, where my garden joins the fields  
Low in the vale, no hedge shuts out the fairies,  
But Art and Nature, intimately sweet,  
Exchange their beauties. Fond amidst them runs  
A brook, that like some babbling child between  
Two bashful lovers, telling tales to each,  
Perfects their friendship. Bowering all the way  
With equal joy, they clothe it, and in love  
Shut out the very sun. Hither my boy  
Came oft, at noon, to sing and meditate  
Antonio's daughter :—his sole confidante  
An ancient dulcimer, the quaint strange spoil  
Of some old disinterrèd city. Here,  
Good Sirs, this traitor met him, and did use—

So I learn now—to sing his witchcraft to him,  
Discoursing much of other mistresses,  
Freedom and Rome—(the Mussulman) : in fine,  
My son, beguiled, Sirs, by this sorcerer's spell,  
Slighted Antonio's daughter, and is gone  
I know not whither.

*A Judge.* Is it likely, friend,  
The poison wrought no further? Had this knave  
No monetary service of your son?  
Had he——

*President.* Eh—money—eh—old gentleman?  
What? Did he rob you?

*Mansueto.* On my honour, *no*.  
My child, Sir, is no felon. He took nothing  
But his old lyre. Nay, now you urge my thought,  
There was an ancient toga which had hung  
With other Roman relics in my hall,  
He took that with him. And God bless him with it!  
Sir, I am not a seer, but methinks  
Your house is childless.

*Prosecutor.* Call Capo di Matti!  
Now, Matti, what are you?

*Matti.* My lords, I am,  
Or was, my lords, of late, house-steward to  
My lord the marquis.

*A Judge.* And you know this man?

*President.* Eh—eh—you know him? Look the man  
in the face.



Turn about, prisoner ! Eh, you dog——

*Matti.*

My lords,

He was a frequent guest where I have served,

A very turbulent fellow, good my lords,

And dangerous to the state.

*A Fudge.*

And in your business ——

*President.* Eh—yes, your business—eh? your daily  
business

At table, eh? and so forth. You have heard——

Speak up, Sir, you have heard?

*Matti.*

As this, my lords.

His manner was to say with many words,

Your worships have no right in Italy,

No, not so much as to the ground you stand on.

Then 'twas his pleasure to revile crown'd heads ;

His highness is no duke,—his majesty

No emperor or king,—my lord the pope——

A Catholic tongue, my lords, may not deliver

His awful discourse of my lord the pope!

But most, my lords, it was his wont to boast

Of some strange secret known to himself only,

To sweep your worships from this land, without

Gun, sword, or pistol. Which, my lords, I hold

To be some compound hot and devilish

Of his black art. My lords, I know the time

When I have sick'd to hear him. Once, my lords,

As I shall answer on my sinful soul,

The prisoner promised my late lord, the marquis,

To show him all his secret after dinner,  
 I' the garden house. My lords, some said that eve  
 It thunder'd. I knew better.

*A Fudge.*

This is fearful.

Well, Sir,—

*Matti.*

And, please our lordships, at my lord's  
 He wore no cowl—my lords, he is no priest—  
 This gown, my lords, is worn the better to carry  
 His villanous compound. I have heard him say so.

*A Fudge.* Heaven and earth !

*President.*

What? What? not a priest, and wear  
 Priest's clothes? Why, blasphemy—eh? Blasphemy,  
 Rank blasphemy—put it down so.

*A Fudge.*

Well, fellow,

This shall be thought on.

*Matti.*

I do fear to say

What more I heard.

*A Fudge.*

Speak out !

*Another.*

Sirrah, thine oath !

*Matti.* Nay then, my lords, nay, to say truth, my  
 lords,

A man is none the worse for what he hears—

Or you, my lords—

*A Fudge.*

Speak to the point !

*Matti.*

My lords,

Am I held guiltless?—Servants have their duties—

*A Fudge.* Speak out, I say.

*Matti.*

My lords, it seems to pass

Man's wickedness—but, as I hope to see  
 Heaven and the blessed, this man hath conspired  
 To level every city, small and great,  
 In all this land save one. Sirs, take it down,  
 I swear, my lords, even to the very words  
 A hundred times repeated, till my knees  
 Shook to stand by—' *Rome all, Rome only,*' so  
 He phrased it. I speak true, my lords—

*Prosecutor.*

The Court

Shall hear a confirmation. You may go.  
 Stand up, Bugiardo Sporco, serving-man  
 To the aforesaid marquis—

*A Voice from the Crowd.* But discharged  
 (Let the Court take good note of it) for lying,  
 Theft, and adultery.

*Prosecutor.*

Silence! my lord marquis.

Now, fellow, have you heard ill of this prisoner?

*Sporco.* Times out of mind, my lord.

*A Fudge.*

Tell what was wont

To be his converse at your master's table.

*Sporco.* First and foremost, to cut all Austrian  
 throats—

Pillage all churches—ravish all the women,  
 And hold them afterwards in common; ten  
 To each man. Then he had a plan to roast—

*Shouts from the Crowd.* Down with the rascal! kill  
 him where he stands.

Stones! Stones! Stones!

*A Fudge.* Soldiers, save the witness.

*Another.* Charge

This rabble.

*A Friend of the Monk's.* Peace, good people.

*The Crowd.* Peace ! peace ! peace !

*Prosecutor.* Call up——

*A Fudge.* The Court is satisfied. Arraign

The prisoner.

*An Officer.* How say'st thou, Vittorio Santo,  
Sometime, but falsely, self-styled Monk of Jesus,  
And now on trial. Thou hast had free hearing  
Of thine accusers. Speak. Guilty or not ?

*The Monk (musing).* ' It is in vain to rise up early,  
to sit

Up late, to eat the bread of sorrows. So  
He giveth His beloved rest.'

*Officer.* Vittorio Santo ! self-styled Monk of Jesus,  
Guilty or not ? Answer !

*The Monk (musing).* You, you that cry  
' How long ? ' be patient ; is not your heaven sweet ?

*Officer.* Vittorio Santo—self-styled Monk of Jesus,  
Guilty or not ?

*The Monk (musing).* Brother ! it is thy voice ;  
'Twas well of thee, my brother ! to speak now.  
The home, the plain, the column by the tower,  
Sickness, thy love, loss, death : the revelation,  
Resolve, thought, labour, disappointment, triumph,  
And now the end. Yes, it was well, my brother !

*A Judge.* Shout in his ear. Smite him, ye drowsy guards.

What ! shall this slave despise us ? Corporal, hither !  
Thou hast a voice, cry out, ' Vittorio Santo,  
Guilty or not ? '

*Corporal (shouts).* Santo ! Vittorio Santo !  
Guilty or not ?

*The Monk.* I am a Roman. Find me  
A judge and I refuse not to be tried.

*Prosecutor.* Traitor ! thou standest at the judgment-seat  
Of Wollustling von Bauerhund von Bosen,  
Baron of Herrschwuth and Scheinheiligkeit,  
Count d'Omicidio, Marshal in the armies  
Of that dread sovereign Apostolical  
Our Liege and thine—the imperial Ferdinand,  
Emperor of Austria—King——

*The Monk.* Peace ! I have heard  
His titles. Find me, friend, a judge, and I  
Refuse not to be tried.

*The President.* A judge ! eh ? what ?  
A judge—eh—are we not a judge ? eh ? what ?  
Nay, pull his cowl about his face ! There ! flout him !  
Spit at him ! Dog ! Nay, we will teach thee, cur !  
A judge forsooth ! Pluck the mad priest by the nose ;  
Nay, not a judge ? Then hear thy sentence——

*The Monk.* Spare  
Thy lips, for I appeal.

*President.*                      Appeal, appeal,

Nay, he appeals, the dog! Appeals! hear that!

By Heavens! appeals! *Appeal*, vile slave? to whom?

*The Monk.* To that which—looking o'er your heads  
and through

These walls, which soon shall be as dust—I see

Rise like an awful spirit from the earth.

To you, as yet, invisible. To me,

Present and filling all things. Strong as fate;

Dreadful as heavenly justice; more imperial

Than all the builders of the Babylons;

Invincible as death; and beautiful

As itself only.

*President.* Drag the traitor out!

What! Does he threaten us with ghosts?

*Men rush in shouting.*                      To arms!

To arms!

*Others.* The mob!

*Others.*                      Rebellion!

*Others.*                      Carbonari!

*A Fudge.* Guard the priest!

*Enter Soldier.*

*Soldier.*                      Captain, twenty thousand men,

By my guess—rogues and peasants——

*Captain.*                      How far hence

*Soldier.* Three gunshots.

*Captain.*                      Armed?

*Soldier.* Ordnance, they say !

*Captain.* Who leads ?

*Soldier.* A Woman.

*A Fudge.* Man the gates !

*Men (rushing in).* The mob ! the mob !

*A Spectator (to the Monk).* Be these thy ghosts  
then ?

*The Monk.* Were the troubled waters

The angel ? Yet how many at Bethesda

Saw no more than the trouble !

*Spectator.* Being heal'd,

What matter ?

*The Monk.* Good friend, much. The heal'd will  
worship

The healer.

*Men (rushing in).* Haste, haste, haste.

*More.* My lords ! a woman,

My lords ! a woman like a prophetess,

Hair in the winds, and eyes on fire——

*A Fudge.* We know.

Peace ! Guards, remove the prisoner !

*President.* Eh—eh—what—

Remove—remove—yes, yes, off with him—eh ?

You lag ? You dogs ! lend me a bayonet ! There,

There ! by the heels ! Drag him out by the heels !

*A Fudge (to the Captain).* Tell off two hundred. By  
the southern gate

Lead out your prisoner. Underneath the walls

Let him be shot. Face right about, and reach  
The western heights.

*Great shouts without.* Down with the Austrians!

Arms!

Blood! Charge! Death—death to tyrants! Victory!

Freedom!





# MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

(OF ABOUT THE SAME DATE AS 'THE ROMAN').



MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

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*A MUSING ON A VICTORY.*

(1847.)

Down by the Sutlej shore,  
Where sound the trumpet and the wild tum-tum,  
At winter's eve did come  
A gaunt old northern lion, at whose roar  
The myriad howlers of thy wilds are dumb,  
Blood-stained Ferozepore !

In the rich Indian night,  
And dreaming of his mate beyond the sea,  
Toil-worn but grand to sight,  
He made his lair, in might,  
Beneath thy dark palm-tree,  
And thou didst rouse him to the unequal fight—  
And woe for thee !

For some of that wild land  
Had heard him in the desert where he lay;  
And soon he snuffs upon their hurtling way,  
The hunters—bandby band ;  
And up he gat him from the eastern sand  
And leaped upon his prey.]

Alas for man! Alas for all thy dreams,  
Thou great somnambulist, wherein, outlawed  
From right and thought, thou workest out unawed  
Thy grand fantastic fancies! Thro' the flood,  
The pestilence, the whirlwind, the dread plain  
Of thunders—thro' the earthquake and the storm,  
The deluge and the snows, the whirling ice  
Of the wild glacier, every ghastly form  
Of earth's most vexed vicissitudes of pain,—  
Thro' worlds of fire and seas of mingled bloods  
Thou rushest, dreadful as a maniac god ;  
And only finding that thou wert not sane  
When some great sorrow thunders at thy brain  
And wakes thee trembling by a precipice.

Alas for thee, thou grey-haired man that still  
Art sleeping, and canst hold thy grandchild high  
That he may see the gorgeous wrong go by  
Which slew his father! And for thee, thou bright  
Inheritress of summer-time and light,  
Alas for thee, that thy young cheek is flush'd

With dreaming of the lion and the foe,  
Tho' it had been yet paler than the snow  
Upon the battle-hill, if once had gush'd,  
*But* once before thee, even the feeblest flow  
Of that life's blood that swept in floods below.  
Alas ! that even thy beauty cannot break  
The vampyre spell of such a war-dream's woe,—  
Alas! tho' waking might have been to know  
Things which had made it sweeter not to wake.

Alas for man !—poor hunchback—all so proud  
And yet so conscious ; man that stalks divine  
Because he feels so mortal, speaking loud  
To drown the trembling whisper in his heart,  
And wildly hurrying on from crowd to crowd,  
In hope to shun the faithful shapes that start  
Wherever lake doth sleep or streamlet shine  
In silent solitudes. When once in youth  
Fresh from the spheres, and too severely wise,  
Truth drew the face he longed yet feared to view,  
Stung with the instinct that confessed it true  
He dashed the tablets from her sacred hand ;  
She drops her singing robes and leaves his land ;  
And Fiction, decent in the garb of Truth,  
While lurking mischief lights her lambent eyes,  
Seizes the fallen pencil, and with grave  
Historic features paints the lies we crave.

So war became a welcome woe. The grass  
Grows tear-bedewed upon a lonely grave,  
And we plant sad flow'rs and sweet epitaphs,  
And every grief of monumental stone,  
Above a single woe ; but let men sleep  
In thousands, and we choose their hideous heap  
For Joy to hold his godless orgies on.  
Is it that some strange law's unknown behest  
Makes gladness of the greatest woes we have  
And leaves us but to sorrow for the less ?  
Even as in outward nature light's excess  
Is blindness, and intensest motion rest ;  
Or is it not—oh conscious heart declare—  
That the vast pride of our o'erwrought despair,  
Seeing the infinite grief, and knowing yet  
We have no tears to pay such deep distress,  
Grown wild, repudiates the direful debt,  
And in its very bankrupt madness laughs?—

Yet when this Victory's fame shall pass, as grand  
And griefless as a rich man's funeral,  
Thro' nations that look on with spell-bound eye,  
While echoing plaudits ring from land to land,  
Alas ! will there be none among the good  
And great and brave and free, to speak of all  
The pale piled pestilence of flesh and blood,  
The common cold corruption that doth lie  
Festering beneath the pall ?

Alas ! when time has deified the thought  
Of this day's desperate devilry, and men  
(Who scorn to inherit virtue, but will ape  
Their sires, and bless them, when they sin) shall shape  
A graven image of the thought, and then  
Fall down to worship it—will no one dare,  
While nations kneel before the idol there,  
To stand and tell them it is Juggernaut?  
Alas for man ! if this new crime shall yield  
To truth no harvest for the sighs it cost ;  
If this crowned corpse, this pale ensceptred ghost  
That stalks, Ferozepore, from thy red field  
Robed as a king, shall all unchallenged pass  
Down the proud scene of Time. Alas, alas !  
If there are some to weep and some to pray,  
And none to bow their humbled heads and say,  
Low sighing,—There hath been a mortal strife ;  
And thirteen thousand murdered men lie there,  
And day and night upon the tainted air  
BlaspHEME the Lord of Life.



*ISABEL.*

(1847.)

In the most early morn  
I rise from a damp pillow, tempest-tost,  
To seek the sun with silent gaze forlorn,  
And mourn for thee, my lost  
Isabel.

That early hour I meet  
The daily vigil of my life to keep,  
Because there are no other lights so sweet,  
Or shades so long and deep,  
Isabel.

And best I think of thee  
Beside the duskest shade and brightest sun,  
Whose mystic lot in life it was to be  
Outshone, outwept by none,  
Isabel.

Men said that thou wert fair :  
There is no brightness in the heaven above,  
There is no balm upon the summer air  
Like thy warm love,  
Isabel.

Men saw that thou wert bright :  
There is no wildness in the winds that blow,  
There is no darkness in the winter's night  
Like thy dark woe,  
Isabel.

And yet thy path did miss  
Men's footsteps : in their haunts thou hadst no joy ;  
The thoughts of other worlds were thine in this ;  
In thy sweet piety, and in thy bliss  
And grief, for life too coy,  
Isabel.

And so my heart's despair  
Looks for thee ere the firstling smoke hath curled ;  
While the rapt earth is at her morning pray'r,  
Ere yet she putteth on her workday air  
And robes her for the world,  
Isabel.

When the sun-burst is o'er,  
My lonely way about the world I take,  
Doing and saying much, and feeling more,  
And all things for thy sake,  
Isabel.

But never once I dare  
To see thine image till the day be new,  
And lip hath sullied not the unbreathed air,  
And waking eyes are few,  
Isabel.

Then that lost form appears  
Which was a joy to few on earth but me :  
In the young light I see thy guileless glee,  
In the deep dews thy tears,  
Isabel.

So with Promethean moan  
In widowhood renewed I learn to grieve ;  
Blest with one only thought—that I alone  
Can fade : that thou thro' years shalt still shine on  
In beauty, as in beauty art thou gone,  
Thou morn that knew no eve,  
Isabel.

In beauty art thou gone ;  
As some bright meteor gleams across the night,  
Gazed on by all, but understood by none,  
And dying by its own excess of light,  
Isabel.

*TO A CATHEDRAL TOWER, ON THE EVEN-  
ING OF THE THIRTY-FIFTH ANNIVER-  
SARY OF WATERLOO.*

(FIRST PRINTED IN THE 'ATHENÆUM' OF AUGUST 3, 1850.)

And since thou art no older, 'tis to-day !  
And I, entranced,—with the wide sense of gods  
Confronting Time—receive the equal touch  
Of Past and Present. Yet I am not moved  
To frenzy ; but, with how much calm befits  
The insufficient passions of a soul  
Expanding to celestial limits, take  
Ampler vitality, and fill, serene,  
The years that are and were. Unchanging Pile !  
Our schoolboy fathers play in yonder streets,  
Wherethro' their mothers, new from evening prayer,  
Speak of the pleasant eve, and say Good Night.  
Say on ! to whom, oh never more shall night  
Seem good ; to whom for the last time hath eve  
Been pleasant ! Look up to the sunset skies  
As a babe smiles into his murderer's face,  
Nor see the Fate that flushes all the heaven,  
Unconscious Mother ! Hesper thro' the trees  
Palpitates light ; and thou, beholding peace,

Keepst thy vigil and art fond to think  
His heart is beating for a world of bliss.  
'Oh Sabbath Land !' Ah Mother, doth thine ear  
Discern new silence ? Dost thou dream what right  
The earth may have to seem so still to thee ?  
Oh Sabbath Land ! but on the Belgian plain  
The bolt has fallen ; and the storm draws off  
In scattered thunders groaning round the hills  
And tempest-drops of woe upon the field.  
The king of men has turned his charger's head  
Whose hoofs did shake the world, but clatter now  
Unheeding sod. He turns, and in his track  
The sorrows of the centuries to come  
Cry on the air. He rides into the night,  
Which as a dreadful spirit hails him in  
With lightnings and with voices. Far behind,  
In the War-marish, Victory and Glory  
Fall by each other's hands, like friends of old,  
Unconquered. And the genius of his race,  
Pale, leaning on a broken eagle, dies.  
High in the midst departing Freedom stands  
On hills of slain ; her wings unfurled, her hands  
Toward heaven, her eyes turned, streaming, on the  
earth,  
In act to rise. And all the present Fortunes,  
Hopes, Oracles, and Omens of the world  
Sitting alow, as mourners veiled and dumb,  
Draw, with weird finger, in the battle-slime

The signs of Fate. Behold whom War salutes  
Victor of victors. War, red-hot with toil,  
Spokesman of Death. Death, pale with sated lust  
And hoarse with greed. Behold ! At his strong call  
The bloody dust takes life, and obscene shapes  
Clang on contending wings, wild wheeling round  
His head exulting. How they hate the light  
And rout the fevered sunset that looks back  
Obtesting ! How they scream up at the stars  
And smite in rage the invisible air ! How, like  
A swoop of black thoughts thro' a stormy soul,  
They rush about the Victor and snatch joys  
For all the tyrants of the darkened globe.  
Who shall withstand him ? Him the evening star  
Trembled to see. Our despots, from the first,  
Bequeathed him each a feature, and he walks  
The sum of all oppression and the sign.  
O Earth ! O Heaven ! O Life ! O Death ! O Man !  
Flesh of my flesh, my brother ! Is there hope ?  
Soul, soul ! behold the portent of the time.  
High in the Heaven, the angels, much-attent,  
With conscious faces and averted eyes  
(As one who feels the wrong he will not see,)  
Gaze upon God, and neither frown nor smile.  
Grey Pile,  
Who lookest with thy kindred hills upon  
This quiet England, shadow-robed for sleep,  
I also speak to thee as one whom kin

Emboldens. Demigod among the gods,  
I charge thee by thy human nature speak !  
Doth she sleep well? Thou who hast watched her face,  
Tell me, for thou canst tell, doth the flesh creep ?  
Ah ! and the soil of Albion stirred that day !  
Ah ! and these fields, at midnight, heaved with graves !

The vision ends. Collapsing to a point  
In Time, I see thee, O red Waterloo,  
A deadly wound now healed. From whose great scar  
Upon the brow of MAN, the bloody husks  
Have newly fallen. 'Twas a Felon's blow  
On one who reeling, drunk with life, above  
A precipice, fell by the timely steel ;  
Bled, and, deplete, was whole ; saw with sane eyes  
The gulph that yawned ; and rises, praising God,  
To bind the Assassin.

*CRAZED.*

(FIRST PRINTED IN THE 'ATHENÆUM' OF NOVEMBER 23, 1850.)

'THE Spring again hath started on the course  
Wherein she seeketh Summer thro' the Earth.  
I will arise and go upon my way.  
It may be that the leaves of Autumn hid  
His footsteps from me ; it may be the snows.

'He is not dead. There was no funeral ;  
I wore no weeds. He must be in the Earth.  
Oh where is he, that I may come to him  
And he may charm the fever of my brain.

'Oh Spring, I hope that thou wilt be my friend.  
Thro' the long weary Summer I toiled sore ;  
Having much sorrow of the envious woods  
And groves that burgeoned round me where I came,  
And when I would have seen him, shut him in.

'Also the Honeysuckle and wild bine  
Being in love did hide him from my sight ;  
The Ash-tree bent above him ; vicious weeds  
Withheld me ; Willows in the River-wind  
Hissed at me, by the twilight, waving wands.



‘ Also, for I have told thee, oh dear Spring,  
Thou knowest after I had sunk outworn  
In the late summer gloom till Autumn came,  
I looked up in the light of burning Woods  
And entered on my wayfare when I saw  
Gold on the ground and glory in the trees.

· And all my further journey thou dost know ;  
My toils and outcries as the lusty world  
Grew thin to winter ; and my ceaseless feet  
In vales and on stark hills, till the first snow  
Fell, and the large rain of the latter leaves.

‘ I hope that thou wilt be my friend, oh Spring,  
And give me service of thy winds and streams.  
It needs must be that he will hear thy voice,  
For thou art much as I was when he woo’d  
And won me long ago beside the Dee.

‘ If he should bend above you, oh ye streams,  
And anywhere you look up into eyes  
And think the star of love hath found her mate  
And know, because of day, they are not stars ;  
Oh streams, they are the eyes of my beloved !  
Oh murmur as I murmured once of old,  
And he will stay beside you, oh ye streams,  
And I shall clasp him when my day is come.

‘ Likewise I charge thee, west wind, zephyr wind,  
If thou shalt hear a voice more sweet than thine

About a sunset rosetree deep in June,  
Sweeter than thine, oh wind, when thou dost leap  
Into the tree with passion, putting by  
The maiden leaves that ruffle round their dame,  
And singest and art silent,—having dropt  
In pleasure on the bosom of the rose,—  
Oh wind, it is the voice of my beloved ;  
Wake, wake, and bear me to the voice, oh wind !

‘ Moreover, I do think that the spring birds  
Will be my willing servants. Wheresoe’er  
There mourns a hen-bird that hath lost her mate  
Her will I tell my sorrow—weeping hers.

· And if it be a Lark whereto I speak,  
She shall be ware of how my Love went up  
Sole singing to the cloud ; and evermore  
I hear his song, but him I cannot see.

‘ And if it be a female Nightingale  
That pineth in the depth of silent woods,  
I also will complain to her that night  
Is still. And of the creeping of the winds  
And of the sullen trees, and of the lone  
Dumb Dark. And of the listening of the stars.  
What have we done, what have we done, oh Night ?

‘ Therefore, oh Love, the summer trees shall be  
My watch-towers. Wheresoe’er thou liest bound

I will be there. For ere the spring be past  
I will have preached my dolour through the land,  
And not a bird but shall have all my woe.  
—And whatsoever hath my woe hath me.

‘ I charge you, oh ye flowers fresh from the dead,  
Declare if ye have seen him. You pale flowers,  
Why do you quake and hang the head like me ?

‘ You pallid flowers, why do ye watch the dust  
And tremble ? Ah, you met him in your caves,  
And shrank out shuddering on the wintry air.

‘ Snowdrops, you need not gaze upon the ground,  
Fear not. He will not follow ye ; for then  
I should be happy who am doomed to woe.

‘ Only I bid ye say that he is there,  
That I may know my grief is to be borne,  
And all my Fate is but the common lot.’

She sat down on a bank of Primroses,  
Swayed to and fro, as in a wind of Thought  
That moaned about her, murmuring alow,  
‘ The common lot, oh for the common lot.’

Thus spake she, and behold a gust of grief  
Smote her. As when at night the dreaming wind  
Starts up enraged, and shakes the Trees and sleeps.

‘ Oh early Rain, oh passion of strong crying,  
Say, dost thou weep, oh Rain, for him or me?  
Alas, thou also goest to the Earth  
And enterest as one brought home by fear.

‘ Rude with much woe, with expectation wild,  
So dashest thou the doors and art not seen.  
Whose burial did they speak of in the skies ?

‘ I would that there were any grass-green grave  
Where I might stand and say, “ Here lies my Love ;”  
And sigh, and look down to him, thro’ the Earth.  
And look up, thro’ the clearing skies, and smile.’

Then the Day passed from bearing up the Heavens,  
The sky descended on the Mountain tops  
Unclouded ; and the stars embower’d the Night.

Darkness did flood the Valley ; flooding her.  
And when the face of her great grief was hid,  
Her callow heart, that like a nestling bird  
Clamoured, sank down with plaintive pipe and slow.  
Her cry was like a strange fowl in the dark :  
‘ Alas Night,’ said she ; then like a faint ghost,  
As tho’ the owl did hoot upon the hills,  
‘ Alas Night.’ On the murky silence came  
Her voice like a white sea-mew on the waste  
Of the dark deep ; a-sudden seen and lost

Upon the barren expanse of mid-seas  
Black with the Thunder. 'Alas Night,' said she,  
'Alas Night.' Then the stagnant season lay  
From hill to hill. But when the waning Moon  
Rose, she began with hasty step to run  
The wintry mead ; a wounded bird that seeks  
To hide its head when all the trees are bare.  
Silent,—for all her strength did bear her dread—  
Silent, save when with bursting heart she cried,  
Like one who wrestles in the dark with fiends,  
'Alas Night,' With a dim wild voice of fear  
As though she saw her sorrow by the moon.

The morning dawns . and earlier than the Lark  
She murmureth, sadder than the Nightingale.

'I would I could believe me in that sleep  
When on our bridal morn I thought him dead,  
And dreamed and shrieked and woke upon his breast.

'Oh God, I cannot think that I am blind ;  
I think I see the beauty of the world.  
Perchance but I am blind, and he is near.

'Even as I felt his arm before I woke,  
And clinging to his bosom called on him,  
And wept, and knew and knew not it was he.

'I do thank God I think that I am blind.  
There is a darkness thick about my heart

And all I seem to see is as a dream ;  
My lids have closed, and have shut in the world.

‘ Oh Love, I pray thee take me by the hand ;  
I stretch my hand, oh Love, and quake with dread ;  
I thrust it, and I know not where. Ah me,  
What shall not seize the dark hand of the blind ?

‘ How know I, being blind, I am on Earth ?  
I am in Hell, in Hell, oh Love ! I feel  
There is a burning gulph before my feet !  
I dare not stir—and at my back the fiends !  
I wind my arms, my arms that demons scorch,  
Round this poor breast, and all that thou shouldst save  
From rapine. Husband, I cry out from Hell ;  
There is a gulph. They seize my flesh.’ (She shrieked.)

‘ I will sink down here where I stand. All round  
How know I but the burning pit doth yawn ?  
Here will I shrink and shrink to no more space  
Than my feet cover.’ (She wept.) ‘ So much up  
My mortal touch makes honest. Oh my Life,  
My Lord, my Husband ! Fool that cryest in vain !  
Ah Angel ! What hast thou to do with Hell ?

‘ And yet I do not ask thee, oh my Love,  
To lead me to thee where thou art in Heaven.  
Only I would that thou shouldst be my star,

And whatsoever Fate thy beams dispense  
I am content. It shall be good to me.

‘ But tho’ I may not see thee, oh my Love,  
Yea, though mine eyes return and miss thee still,  
And thou shouldst take another shape than thine,  
Have pity on my lot, and lead me hence  
Where I may think of thee. To the old fields  
And wonted valleys where we once were blest.  
Oh Love, all day I hear them, out of sight,  
The far Home where the Past abideth yet  
Beside the stream that prates of other days.

‘ My Punishment is more than I can bear.  
My sorrow groweth big unto my time.  
Oh Love, I would that I were mad. Oh Love,  
I do not ask that thou shouldst change my Fate,  
I will endure ; but oh my Life, my Lord,  
Being as thou art a thronèd saint in Heaven,  
If thou wouldst touch me and enchant my sense,  
And daze the anguish of my heart with dreams,  
And change the stop of grief ; and turn my soul  
A little devious from the daily march  
Of Reason, and the path of conscious woe  
And all the truth of Life ! Better, oh Love,  
In fond delusion to be twice betrayed,  
Than know so well and bitterly as I.  
Let me be mad.’ (She wept upon her knees.)

‘ I will arise and seek thee. This is Heaven.  
I sat upon a cloud. It bore me in.  
It is not so, you Heavens ! I am not dead.  
Alas ! there have been pangs as strong as Death.  
It would be sweet to know that I am dead.

‘ Even now I feel I am not of this world,  
Which sayeth, day and night, “ For all but thee,”  
And poureth its abundance night and day  
And will not feed the hunger in my heart.

‘ I tread upon a dream, myself a dream,  
I cannot write my Being on the world,  
The moss grows unrespective where I tread.

‘ I cannot lift mine eyes to the sunshine,  
Night is not for my slumber. Not for me  
Sink down the dark inexorable hours.

‘ I would not keep or change the weary day ;  
I have no pleasure in the needless night,  
And toss and wail that other lids may sleep.

‘ I am a very Leper in the Earth.  
Her functions cast me out ; her golden wheels  
That harmless roll about unconscious Babes  
Do crush me. My place knoweth me no more.



‘ I think that I have died, oh you sweet Heavens.  
I did not see the closing of the eyes.  
Perchance there is one death for all of us  
Whereof we cannot see the eyelids close.

‘ Dear Love, I do beseech thee answer me.  
Dear Love, I think men’s eyes behold me not.  
The air is heavy on these lips that strain  
To cry ; I do not warm the thing I touch ;  
The Lake gives back no image unto me.

‘ I see the Heavens as one who wakes at noon  
From a deep sleep. Now shall we meet again !  
The Country of the blest is hid from me  
Like Morn behind the Hills. The Angel smiles.  
I breathe thy name. He hurleth me from Heaven.

‘ Now of a truth I know thou art on Earth.  
Break, break the chains that hold me back from thee.  
I see the race of mortal men pass by ;  
The great wind of their going waves my hair ;  
I stretch my hands, I lay my cheek to them,  
In love ; they stir the down upon my cheek ;  
I cannot touch them, and they know not me.

‘ Oh God ! I ask to live the saddest life !  
I care not for it if I may but live !  
I would not be among the dead, oh God !  
I am not dead ! oh God, I will not die !’

So throbbed the trouble of this crazed heart.  
So on the broken mirror of her mind  
In bright disorder shone the shatter'd World.  
So, out of tune, in sympathetic chords,  
Her soul is musical to brooks and birds,  
Winds, seasons, sunshine, flowers, and maundering trees.

Hear gently all the tale of her distress.  
The heart that loved her loves not now yet lives.  
What the eye sees and the ear hears—the hand  
That wooing led her thro' the rosy paths  
Of girlhood, and the lenten lanes of Love,  
The brow whereon she trembled her first kiss,  
The lips that had sole privilege of hers,  
The eyes wherein she saw the Universe,  
The bosom where she slept the sleep of joy,  
The voice that made it sacred to her sleep  
With lustral vows ; that which doth walk the World  
Man among Men, is near her now. But He  
Who wandered with her thro' the ways of Youth,  
Who won the tender freedom of the lip,  
Who took her to the bosom dedicate  
And chaste with vows, who in the perfect whole  
Of gracious Manhood was the god that stood  
In her young Heaven, round whom the subject stars  
Circled : in whose dear train, where'er he passed  
Thronged charmèd powers ; at whose advancing feet  
Upspringing happy seasons and sweet times

Made fond court carolling ; who but moved to stir  
All things submissive, which did magnify  
And wane as ever with his changing will  
She changed the centre of her infinite ; He  
In whom she worshipped Truth, and did obey  
Goodness ; in whose sufficient love she felt,  
Fond Dreamer ! the eternal smile of all  
Angels and men ; round whom, upon his neck,  
Her thoughts did hang ; whom lacking they fell down  
Distract to the earth ; He whom she *loved*, and who  
Loved her of old,—in the long days before  
Chaos, the empyrean days !—(Poor heart,  
She phrased it so) is no more : and O God !  
Thorough all Time, and that transfigured Time  
We call Eternity, will be no more.

*THE SNOWDROP IN THE SNOW.*

(FIRST PRINTED IN THE ATHENÆUM OF MARCH 1ST, 1851.)

O FULL of Faith ! The Earth is rock,—the Heaven  
 The dome of a great palace all of ice,  
 Russ-built. Dull light distils through frozen skies  
 Thickened and gross. Cold Fancy droops her wing,  
 And cannot range. In winding-sheets of snow  
 Lies every thought of any pleasant thing.  
 I have forgotten the green earth ; my soul  
 Deflowered, and lost to every summer hope,  
 Sad sitteth on an iceberg at the Pole ;  
 My heart assumes the landscape of mine eyes  
 Moveless and white, chill blanched with hoarest rime  
 The Sun himself is heavy and lacks cheer  
 Or on the eastern hill or western slope ;  
 The world without seems far and long ago ;  
 To silent woods stark famished winds have driven  
 The last lean robin—gibbering winds of fear !  
 Thou only darest to believe in spring,  
 Thou only smilest, Lady of the Time !

Even as the stars come up out of the sea  
Thou risest from the Earth. How is it down  
In the dark depths? Should I delve there, O Flower,  
For beauty? Shall I find the Summer there  
Met manifold, as in an ark of peace?  
And Thou, a lone white Dove, art thou sent forth  
Upon the winter deluge? It shall cease,  
But not for thee—pierced by the ruthless North  
And spent with the Evangel. In what hour  
The flood abates thou wilt have closed thy wings  
For ever. When the happy living things  
Of the old world come forth upon the new  
I know my heart shall miss thee; and the dew  
Of summer twilights shall shed tears for me  
—Tears liker thee, ah, purest! than mine own—  
Upon thy vestal grave, O vainly fair!

Thou should'st have noble destiny, who, like  
A Prophet, art shut out from kind and kin:  
Who on the winter silence comest in  
A still small voice. Pale Hermit of the Year,  
Flower of the Wilderness! oh, not for thee  
The jocund playmates of the maiden spring.  
For when she danceth forth with cymballed feet,  
Waking a-sudden with great welcoming,  
Each calling each, they burst from hill to dell  
In answering music. But thou art a bell,  
A passing bell, snow-muffled, dim and sweet.

As is the Poet to his fellow-men,  
So mid thy drifting snows, O Snowdrop, Thou.  
Gifted, in sooth, beyond them, but no less  
A snowdrop. And thou shalt complete his lot  
And bloom as fair as now when they are not.  
Thou art the wonder of the seasons, O  
First-born of Beauty. As the Angel near  
Gazed on that first of living things which, when  
The blast that ruled since Chaos o'er the sere  
Leaves of primeval Palms did sweep the plain,  
Clung to the new-made sod and would not drive,  
So gaze I upon thee amid the reign  
Of Winter. And because thou livest, I live.  
And art thou happy in thy loneliness?  
Oh couldst thou hear the shouting of the floods,  
Oh couldst thou know the stir among the trees  
When—as the herald-voice of breeze on breeze  
Proclaims the marriage pageant of the Spring  
Advancing from the South—each hurries on  
His wedding-garment, and the love-chimes ring  
Thro' nuptial valleys! No, serene and lone,  
I will not flush thy cheek with joys like these.  
Songs for the rosy morning; at grey prime  
To hang the head and pray. Thou doest well.  
I will not tell thee of the bridal train.  
No; let thy Moonlight die before their day  
A Nun among the Maidens, thou and they.  
Each hath some fond sweet office that doth strike

One of our trembling heartstrings musical.  
Is not the hawthorn for the Queen of May?  
And cuckoo-flowers for whom the cuckoo's voice  
Hails, like an answering sister, to the woods?  
Is not the maiden blushing in the rose?  
Shall not the babe and buttercup rejoice,  
Twins in one meadow! Are not violets all  
By name or nature for the breast of Dames?  
For them the primrose, pale as star of prime,  
For them the wind-flower, trembling to a sigh,  
For them the dew stands in the eyes of day  
That blink in April on the daisied lea?  
Like them they flourish and like them they fade,  
And live beloved and loving. But for thee—  
For such a bevy how art thou arrayed,  
Flower of the Tempests? What hast thou with them?  
Thou shalt be pearl unto a diadem  
Which the Heavens jewel. *They* shall deck the brows  
Of joy and wither there. But *thou* shalt be  
A Martyr's garland. Thou who, undismayed,  
To thy spring dreams art true amid the snows  
As he to better dreams amid the flames.

*THE HARPS OF HEAVEN.*

ON a solemn day  
I clomb the shining bulwark of the skies :  
Not by the beaten way,  
But climbing by a prayer,  
That like a golden thread hung by the giddy stair  
Fleck'd on the immemorial blue,  
By the strong step-stroke of the brave and few,  
Who, stirr'd by echoes of far harmonies,  
Must either lay them down and die of love,  
Or dare  
Those empyrean walls that mock their starward eyes.  
But midway in the dread emprise  
The faint and fainter footsteps cease ;  
And, all my footing gone,  
Like one who gathers samphire, I hold on,  
And in the swaying air look up and down :  
And up and down through answering vasts descry  
Nor Earth nor Heaven ;  
Above,  
The sheer eternal precipice ; below,



The sheer eternal precipice.  
Then when I,  
Gigantic with my desperate agony,  
Felt even  
The knotted grasp of bodily despair  
Relaxing to let go,  
A mighty music, like a wind of light,  
Blew from the imminent height,  
And caught me in its splendour ; and, as flame  
That flickers and again aspires,  
Rose in a moment thither whence it came ;  
And I, that thought me lost,  
Pass'd to the top of all my dear desires,  
And stood among the everlasting host.  
Then turn'd I to a seraph whose swift hands,  
That lived angelic passion, struck his soul  
Upon a harp—a seraph fair and strong,  
And faultless for his harp and for his throne,  
And yet, among  
The Strength and Beauty of the heavenly bands,  
No more to be remember'd than some one  
Poor warrior, when a king of many kings  
Stamps on the fields, and rears his glittering crop  
Of standing steel, and the vex'd spirit wings  
Above the human harvest, and in vain  
Begins from morn till eve to sum the embattled plain ;  
Or when,  
After a day of peace, sudden and late

The beacon flashes and the war-drums roll,  
And through the torches of the city gate,  
All the long winter night a martial race  
Streams to the nation's gathering-place,  
And, like as water-drop to water-drop,  
Pour on in changeless flood the innumerable men.  
I turn'd, and as from footing in mid-seas  
Looking o'er lessening waves thou may'st behold  
The round horizon of unshadow'd gold,  
I, standing on an amethyst, look'd round  
The moving Heaven of Harpers throned and crown'd,  
And said, 'Was it from these  
I heard the great sound?' And he said, 'What sound?'  
Then I grown bolder, seeing I had thriven  
To win reply—'This that I hear from thee,  
This that everywhere I hear,  
Rolling a sea of choristry  
Up and down the jewel of Heaven;  
A sea which from thy seat of light,  
That seems more loud and bright  
Because more near,  
To the white twinkle of yon furthest portal,  
Swells up those circling shores of chrysolite,  
And, like an odorous luminous mist, doth leap the  
eternal walls,  
And falls  
In wreaths of melody  
Adown the azure mountain of the sky;

And round its lower slopes bedew'd  
Breathes lost beatitude ;  
And far away,  
Low, low, below the last of all its lucent scarps,  
Sprinkles bewildering drops of immortality.  
O angel fair, thou know'st what I would say—  
This sound of harpers that I hear,  
This sound of harpers harping on their harps.'  
Then he bent his head  
And shed a tear  
And said,  
' I perceive thou art a mortal.'  
Then I to him—' Not only, O thou bright  
Seraphic Pity ! to a mortal ear  
These sacred sounds are dear,  
Or why withholdest not thy ceaseless hand ?  
And why,  
Far as my dazzled eye  
Can pierce the lustre of the radiant land,  
See I the rapt celestial auditory,  
Each, while he blessed hears, gives back his bliss  
With never-tiring touch from golden harps like this ?  
Then he to me—' Oh, wherefore hast thou trod  
Beyond the limit of thine earthly lot ?  
These that we bear  
Within our hands are instruments of glory,  
Wherewith, day without night,  
We make the glory of immortal light

In the eyes of God.  
As for the sound, we hear it not ;  
Yet, speaking to thee, child of ignorance,  
I do remember that I loved it once,  
In the sweet lower air.'  
Yet he spake once more;—  
' But thou return to the remember'd shore ;  
Why shouldst thou leave thy nation,  
Thy city, and the house of all most dear?  
Do we not all dwell in eternity?  
For we have been as thou, and thou  
Shalt be as we.'  
And he lean'd and kissèd me,  
Saying, ' But now  
Rejoice, O child, in other joys than mine  
Hear the dear music of thy mortal ear  
While yet it is the time with thee,  
Nor make haste to thine exaltation,  
Though our state be better than thine.'



## SONNETS ON THE WAR.

(THESE SONNETS WERE FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1855.)



## SONNETS ON THE WAR.

(THE CRIMEAN STRUGGLE.)

*L'AVENIR.*

I SAW the human millions as the sand  
 Unruffled on the starlit wilderness.  
 The day was near, and every star grew less  
 In universal dawn. Then woke a band  
 Of wheeling winds, and made a mighty stress  
 Of morning weather ; and still wilder went  
 O'er shifting plains, till, in their last excess,  
 A whirlwind whirled across the whirling land.  
 Heaven blackened over it ; a voice of woes  
 Foreran it ; the great noise of clanging foes  
 Hurtled behind ; beneath the earth was rent,  
 And howling Death, like an uncaverned beast,  
 Leaped from his lair. Meanwhile morn oped the East,  
 And thro' the dusty tumult God arose.



*THE ARMY SURGEON.*

OVER that breathing waste of friends and foes,  
The wounded and the dying, hour by hour,—  
In will a thousand, yet but one in power,—  
He labours thro' the red and groaning day.  
The fearful moorland where the myriads lay  
Moved as a moving field of mangled worms.  
And as a raw brood, orphaned in the storms,  
Thrust up their heads if the wind bend a spray  
Above them, but when the bare branch performs  
No sweet parental office, sink away  
With hopeless chirp of woe, so as he goes  
Around his feet in clamorous agony  
They rise and fall ; and all the seething plain  
Bubbles a cauldron vast of many-coloured pain.

*THE WOUNDED.*

'THOU canst not wish to live,' the surgeon said.  
 He clutched him, as a soul thrust forth from bliss  
 Clings to the ledge of Heaven ! ' Would'st thou keep this  
 Poor branchless trunk ? ' ' But she would lean my head  
 Upon her breast ; oh, let me live ! ' ' Be wise.'  
 ' I could be very happy ; both these eyes  
 Are left me ; I should see her ; she would kiss  
 My forehead : only let me live.'—He dies  
 Even in the passionate prayer. ' Good Doctor, say  
 If thou canst give more than another day  
 Of life ? ' ' I think there may be hope.' ' Pass on.  
 I will not buy it with some widow's son ! '  
 ' Help,' ' help,' ' help,' ' help ! ' ' God curse thee ! '  
     ' Doctor, stay,  
 Yon Frenchman went down earlier in the day.'

*THE WOUNDED.*

‘SEE to my brother, Doctor ; I have lain  
All day against his heart ; it is warm there ;  
This stiffness is a trance ; he lives ! I swear,—  
I swear he lives !’ ‘Good Doctor, tell my ain  
Auld Mother ’—but his pale lips moved in vain.  
‘Doctor, when you were little Master John,  
I left the old place ; you will see it again.  
Tell my poor Father,—turn down the wood-lane  
Beyond the home-field—cross the stepping stone  
To the white cottage, with the garden gate—  
O God !’—he died. ‘Doctor, when I am gone  
Send this to England.’ ‘Doctor, look upon  
A countryman !’ ‘Devant mon Chef? Ma foi !’  
‘Oui, il est blessé beaucoup plus que moi.’

*FOX POPULI.*

WHAT if the Turk be foul or fair? Is't known  
That the sublime Samaritan of old  
Withheld his hand till the bruised wretch had told  
His creed? Your neighbour's roof is but a shed,  
Yet if he burns shall not the flame enfold  
Your palace? Saving his, you save your own.  
Oh ye who fall that Liberty may stand,  
The light of coming ages shines before  
Upon your graves! Oh ye immortal band,  
Whether ye wrestled with this Satan o'er  
A dead dog, or the very living head  
Of Freedom, every precious drop ye bled  
Is holy. 'Tis not for his broken door  
That the stern goodman shoots the burglar dead.

*CZAR NICHOLAS.*

WE could not turn from that colossal foe,  
The morning shadow of whose hideous head  
Darkened the furthest West, and who did throw  
His evening shade on Ind. The polar bow  
Behind him flamed and paled, and through the red  
Uncertain dark his vasty shape did grow  
Upon the sleepless nations. Lay him low !  
Aye, low as for our priceless English dead  
We lie and groan to-day in England ! Oh,  
My God ! I think Thou hast not finished  
This Thy fair world, where, triumph Ill or Good,  
We still must weep ; where or to lose or gain  
Is woe ; where Pain is medicined by Pain,  
And Blood can only be washed out by Blood.

*CAVALRY CHARGE AT BALACLAVA.*

TRAVELLER on foreign ground, whoe'er thou art,  
Tell the great tidings ! They went down that day  
A Legion, and came back from victory  
Two hundred men and Glory ! On the mart  
Is this '*to lose ?*' Yet, Stranger, thou shalt say  
These were our common Britons. 'Tis our way  
In England. Aye, ye heavens ! I saw them part  
The Death-Sea as an English dog leaps o'er  
The rocks into the ocean. He goes in  
Thick as a lion, and he comes out thin  
As a starved wolf ; but lo ! he brings to shore  
A life above his own, which when his heart  
Bursts with that final effort, from the stones  
Springs up and builds a temple o'er his bones.

*HOME, IN WAR-TIME.*

SHE turned the fair page with her fairer hand—  
More fair and frail than it was wont to be—  
O'er each remembered thing he loved to see  
She lingered, and as with a fairy's wand  
Enchanted it to order. Oft she fanned  
New motes into the sun ; and as a bee  
Sings thro' a brake of bells, so murmured she,  
And so her patient love did understand  
The reliquary room. Upon the sill  
She fed his favourite bird. · Ah, Robin, sing !  
He loves thee.' Then she touches a sweet string  
Of soft recall, and towards the Eastern hill  
Smiles all her soul—for him who cannot hear  
The raven croaking at his carrion ear.

*WARNING.*

VIRTUE is Virtue, writ in ink or blood.  
And Duty, Honour, Valour, are the same  
Whether they cheer the thundering steps of Fame  
Up echoing hills of Alma, or, more blest,  
Walk with her in that band where she is least  
Thro' smiling plains and cities doing good.  
Yet, oh to sing them in their happier day !  
Yon glebe is not the hind whose manhood mends  
Its rudeness, yet it gains but while he spends,  
And mulcts him rude. Even that sinless Lord  
Whose feet wan Mary washed, went not His way  
Uncoloured by the Galilean field ;  
And Honour, Duty, Valour, seldom wield  
With stainless hand the immedicable sword.



*AMERICA.*

MEN say, Columbia, we shall hear thy guns.  
But in what tongue shall be thy battle-cry?  
Not that our sires did love in years gone by,  
When all the Pilgrim Fathers were little sons  
In merrie homes of Englaunde? Back, and see  
Thy satchelled ancestor! Behold, he runs  
To mine, and; clasped, they tread the equal lea  
To the same village-school, where side by side  
They spell 'our Father.' Hard by, the twin-pride  
Of that grey hall whose ancient oriel gleams  
Thro' yon baronial pines, with looks of light  
Our sister-mothers sit beneath one tree.  
Meanwhile our Shakspeare wanders past and dreams  
His Helena and Hermia. Shall we fight?

*AMERICA.*

NOR force nor fraud shall sunder us'! Oh ye  
Who north or south, on east or western land,  
Native to noble sounds, say truth for truth,  
Freedom for freedom, love for love, and God  
For God ; Oh ye who in eternal youth  
Speak with a living and creative flood  
This universal English, and do stand  
Its breathing book ; live worthy of that grand  
Heroic utterance—parted, yet a whole,  
Far, yet unsevered,—children brave and free  
Of the great Mother-tongue, and ye shall be  
Lords of an Empire wide as Shakspeare's soul,  
Sublime as Milton's immemorial theme,  
And rich as Chaucer's speech, and fair as Spencer's  
dream.

*A STATESMAN.*

CAPTAIN be he, my England, who doth know  
Not careful coasts, with inland welcomes warm ;  
But who, with heart infallible, can go  
Straight to the gulf-streams of the World, where blow  
The inevitable Winds. Let cockles swarm  
The sounded shores. He helms Thee, England ! who,  
Faced by the very Spirit of the Storm,  
Full at the phantom drives his dauntless prow !  
And tho' the Vision rend in racks of blood,  
And drip in thunder from his reeling spars,  
The compass in his hand, beholds the flood  
Beneath, o'er-head the everlasting stars  
Dim thro' the gory ghost ; and calm in these,  
Thro' that tremendous dream sails on to happier seas.

*POLAND. ITALY. HUNGARY.*

IN the great Darkness of the Passion, graves  
Were oped, and many Saints which slept arose.  
So in this latter Darkness, which doth close  
Upon our noon. That Peace Divine which saves  
And blesses, and from the celestial waves  
Of whose now-parted garment our worst woes  
Did touch a healing virtue, by our foes  
Is crucified. The inextricable slaves  
Have slain what should have set them free. Behold  
The vail is rent ! Earth yawns ; the rocks are hurled  
In twain ; and Kingdoms long since low and cold,  
Each with his dead forgotten brow enfurled .  
In that proud flag he fell upon of old,  
Come forth into the City of the World.

*JERUSALEM.*

IF God so raise the Dead, shall He pass by  
The Captive and the immemorable chain?  
*Judæa capta*!—taken but not slain—  
And cursèd not to die—ah, not to die?  
Then come out of thine ages, thou art free!  
Live but one Greek in old Thermopylæ,  
And Greece is saved! Dark stands the Northern Fate  
At Europe's open door; upon her nod  
To pass that breach a hundred nations wait.  
What! shall we meet her with the bayonet?  
As the West sets the Sun 'twixt sea and sky  
In that Great Gate, Immortal! let us set  
Thy doom; quit Destiny with Destiny,  
Meet Fate by Fate, and fill the gap with God.

*AUSTRIAN ALLIANCE.*

DOTH this hand live ? Trust not a royal coat,  
My country ! Smite that cheek ; there is no stain  
But of the clay ! no flush of shame or pain.  
This is the smell o' the grave. Lift the gold crown  
And see that brow. Lo ! how the dews drip down  
The empty house ! The worm is on the walls,  
And the half-shuttered lights are dull and dead  
With dusty desecration. The soul fled  
On a spring-day within thy palace-halls,  
Hapsburg ! and all the days of all the springs  
Of all the ages bring it not again !  
Vampyre ! we wrench thee from the breathing throat  
Of living Man, and he leaps up and flings  
Thy rotten carcase at the heads of Kings.

*CHILDLESS.*

THE SON thou sentest forth is now a Thought—  
A Dream. To all but thee he is as nought  
As if he had gone back into the same  
Bosom that bare him. Oh, thou grey pale Dame,  
With eyes so wan and wide, what I knowest thou where  
Thy Dream is such a thing as doth up-bear  
The earth out of its wormy place? I' the air  
Dost see the very fashion of the stone  
That hath his face for clay? Deep, deep, hast found  
The texture of that single weight of ground  
Which to each mole and mark that thou hast known  
Is special burden? Nay, her face is mild  
And sweet. In Heaven the evening star is fair,  
And there the mother looketh for her child.

*THE COMMON GRAVE.*

LAST night beneath the foreign stars I stood  
 And saw the thoughts of those at home go by  
 To the great grave upon the hill of blood.  
 Upon the darkness they went visibly,  
 Each in the vesture of its own distress.  
 Among them there came One, frail as a sigh,  
 And like a creature of the wilderness  
 Dug with her bleeding hands. She neither cried  
 Nor wept ; nor did she see the many stark  
 And dead that lay unburied at her side.  
 All night she toiled, and at that time of dawn,  
 When Day and Night do change their More and Less,  
 And Day is More, I saw the melting Dark  
 Stir to the last, and knew she laboured on.



*ESSE ET POSSE.*

THE groan of fallen Hosts ; a torrid glare  
Of cities ; battle-cries of Right and Wrong  
Where armies shout to rocking fleets that roar  
On thundering oceans to the thundering shore,  
And high o'er all—long, long prolonged, along  
The moaning caverns of the plaining air,—  
The cry of conscious Fate. The firmament  
Waves from above me like a tattered flag ;  
And as a soldier in his lowly tent  
Looks up when a shot strikes the helpless rag  
From o'er him, and beholds the canopy  
Of Heaven, so, sudden to my startled eye,  
The Heavens that shall be ! The dream fades. I stand  
Among the mourners of a mourning land.

*GOOD-NIGHT IN WAR-TIME.*

(TO ALEXANDER SMITH.)

THE stars we saw arise are high above,  
 And yet our Evensong seems sung too soon.  
 Good-Night ! I lay my hand—with such a love  
 As thou wert brother of my blood—upon  
 Thy shoulder, and methinks beneath the moon  
 Those sisters, Anglia and Caledon,  
 Lean towards each other. Aye, for Man is one ;  
 We are a host ruled by one trumpet-call,  
 Where each, armed in his sort, makes as he may  
 The general motion: The well-tuned array  
 We see ; yet to what victory in what wars  
 We see not ; but like the revolving stars  
 Move on ourselves. The total march of all  
 Or men or stars God knows. Lord, lead us on !



# ENGLAND IN TIME OF WAR.

(THESE LYRICS WERE FIRST PRINTED IN 1856.)



## ENGLAND IN TIME OF WAR.

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### *DESOLATE.*

FROM the sad eaves the drip-drop of the rain !  
The water washing at the latchel door ;  
A slow step plashing by upon the moor ;  
A single bleat far from the famished fold ;  
The clicking of an embered hearth and cold ;  
The rainy Robin tic-tac at the pane.

‘ So as it is with thee  
Is it with me,  
So as it is and it used not to be,  
With thee used not to be,  
Nor me.’  
So singeth Robin on the willow tree,  
The rainy Robin tic-tac at the pane.

Here in this breast all day  
The fire is dim and low,  
Within I care not to stay,  
Without I care not to go.

A sadness ever sings  
Of unforgotten things,  
And the bird of love is patting at the pane ;  
But the wintry water deepens at the door,  
And a step is plashing by upon the moor  
Into the dark upon the darkening moor,  
And alas, alas, the drip-drop of the rain !

*THE MARKET-WIFE'S SONG.<sup>1</sup>*

THE butter an' the cheese weel stowit they be,  
 I sit on the hen-coop the eggs on my knee,  
 The lang kail jigs as we jog owre the rigs,  
 The gray mare's tail it wags wi' the kail,  
 The warm simmer sky is blue aboon a',  
 An' whiddie, whuddie, whaddie, gang the auld wheels twa.

I sit on the coop, I look straight before,  
 But my heart it is awa' the braid ocean owre,  
 I see the bluidy fiel' where my ain bonny chiel',  
 My wee bairn o' a', gaed to fight or to fa',  
 An' whiddie, whuddie, whaddie, gang the auld wheels twa.

<sup>1</sup> In several of the Scottish songs of this volume, the author wishes, notwithstanding whatever *couleur locale* they may possess, to be understood as speaking rather for a class than a locality. As most of the English provincial dialects are poetically objectionable, and are modifications of tongues which exist more purely in the 'Lallans' of Scotland, it seemed to him that when expressing the general peasant life of the empire he might employ the central truth of that noble Doric which is at once rustic and dignified, heroic and vernacular.



I see the gran' toun o' the big forrin' loun,  
I hear the cannon soun', I see the reek aboon ;  
It may be lang John lettin' aff his gun,  
It may be the mist—your mither disna wist—  
It may be the kirk, it may be the ha',  
An' whiddie, whuddie, whaddie, gang the auld wheels twa.

An' I ken the Black Sea, ayont the rock o' dool,  
Like a muckle blot o' ink in a buik fra' the schule,  
An' Jock ! it gars me min' o' your buikies lang syne,  
An' mindin' o' it a' the tears begin to fa',  
An' whiddie, whuddie, whaddie, gang the old wheels twa.

Then a bull roars fra' the scaur, ilka rock 's a bull agen, '  
An' I hear the trump o' war, an' the carse is fu' o' men,  
Up an' doun the morn I ken the bugle horn,  
Ilka birdie sma' is a fleein' cannon ba',  
An' whiddie, whuddie, whaddie, gang the auld wheels twa.

Guid Heavens ! the Russian host ! We maun e'en gie  
up for lost !

Gin ye gain the battle hae ye countit a' the cost ?  
Ye may win a gran' name, but wad wee Jock come hame ?  
Dinna fecht, dinna fecht ! there's room for us a',  
An' whiddie, whuddie, whaddie, gang the auld wheels twa.

In vain, in vain, in vain ! They are marchin' near and  
far !

Wi' swords an' wi' slings an' wi' instruments o' war !

Oh, day sae dark an' sair ! ilka man seven feet an' mair !  
I bow my head an' say, ' Gin the Lord wad smite them  
a' !'

An' whiddie, whuddie, whaddie, gang the auld wheels twa.

Then forth fra' their ban' there steps an armed man,  
His tairge at his breast an' his claymore in his han',  
His gowd pow glitters fine an' his shadow fa's behin',  
I think o' great Goliath as he stan's before them a',  
An' whiddie, whuddie, whaddie, gang the auld wheels twa.

To meet the Philistine leaps a laddie fra' our line,  
Oh, my heart ! oh, my heart ! 'tis that wee lad o' mine !  
I start to my legs—an' down fa' the eggs—  
The cocks an' hens a' they cackle an' they ca',  
An' whiddie, whuddie, whaddie, gang the auld wheels twa.

Oh, Jock, my Hielan' lad—oh, Jock, my Hielan' lad,  
Never till I saw thee that moment was I glad !  
Aye sooner sud thou dee before thy mither's ee'  
Than a man o' the clan sud hae stept out but thee !  
An' sae I cry to God—while the hens cackle a',  
An' whiddie, whuddie, whaddie, gang the auld wheels twa.

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*THE LITTLE GIRL'S SONG.*

Do not mind my crying, Papa, I am not crying for pain.  
Do not mind my shaking, Papa, I am not shaking with  
fear ;  
Tho' the wild wild wind is hideous to hear,  
And I see the snow and the rain.  
When will you come back again,  
Papa, Papa ?

Somebody else that you love, Papa,  
Somebody else that you dearly love  
Is weary, like me, because you're away.  
Sometimes I see her lips tremble and move,  
And I seem to know what they're going to say ;  
And every day, and all the long day,  
I long to cry, ' Oh Mamma, Mamma,  
When will Papa come back again ? '  
But before I can say it I see the pain  
Creeping up on her white white cheek,  
As the sweet sad sunshine creeps up the white wall,  
And then I am sorry, and fear to speak ;  
And slowly the pain goes out of her cheek,

As the sad sweet sunshine goes from the wall.  
Oh, I wish I were grown up wise and tall,  
That I might throw my arms round her neck  
And say, 'Dear Mamma, oh, what is it all  
That I see and see and do not see  
In your white white face all the livelong day?'  
But she hides her grief from a child like me.  
When will you come back again,  
Papa, Papa?

Where were you going, Papa, Papa?  
All this long while have you been on the sea?  
When she looks as if she saw far away,  
Is she thinking of you, and what does she see?  
Are the white sails blowing,  
And the blue men rowing,  
And are you standing on the high deck  
Where we saw you stand till the ship grew gray,  
And we watched and watched till the ship was a speck,  
And the dark came first to you, far away?  
I wish I could see what she can see,  
But she hides her grief from a child like me.  
When will you come back again,  
Papa, Papa?

Don't you remember, Papa, Papa,  
How we used to sit by the fire, all three,  
And she told me tales while I sat on her knee,

And heard the winter winds roar down the street,  
And knock like men at the window pane,  
And the louder they roared, oh, it seemed more sweet  
To be warm and warm as we used to be,  
Sitting at night by the fire, all three ?  
When will you come back again,  
Papa, Papa ?

Papa, I like to sit by the fire ;  
Why does she sit far away in the cold ?  
If I had but somebody wise and old,  
That every day I might cry and say,  
' Is she changed, do you think, or do I forget ?  
Was she always as white as she is to-day ?  
Did she never carry her head up higher ? '  
Papa, Papa, if I could but know !  
Do you think her voice was always so low ?  
Did I always see what I seem to see  
When I wake up at night and her pillow is wet ?  
You used to say her hair it was gold —  
It looks like silver to me.  
But still she tells the same tale that she told,  
She sings the same songs when I sit on her knee,  
And the house goes on as it went long ago,  
When we lived together, all three.  
Sometimes my heart seems to sink, Papa,  
And I feel as if I could be happy no more.  
Is she changed, do you think, Papa,

Or did I dream she was brighter before ?  
She makes me remember my snowdrop, Papa,  
That I forgot in thinking of you,

    The sweetest snowdrop that ever I knew !  
But I put it out of the sun and the rain :  
It was green and white when I put it away,  
It had one sweet bell and green leaves four ;  
It was green and white when I found it that day,  
It had one pale bell and green leaves four,  
But I was not glad of it any more.  
Was it changed, do you think, Papa,  
Or did I dream it was brighter before ?

Do not mind my crying, Papa,  
I am not crying for pain.  
Do not mind my shaking, Papa,  
I am not shaking for fear ;  
Tho' the wild wild wind is hideous to hear,  
And I see the snow and the rain.  
When will you come back again,  
Papa, Papa ?

*'HE IS SAFE.'*

· AND it shall come to pass at eventide  
There shall be light.' Lord, it hath come to pass.  
As one day to the world so now to me  
Thine advent. My dark eve is white as noon ;  
My year so sour and green is gold and red ;  
Mine eyes have seen Thy Goodness. All is done.

All things bespeak an end. I am come near  
The crown o' this steep earth. My feet still stand  
Cold in the western shadow, but my brow  
Lives in the living light. The toil is o'er,  
Surely ' He giveth His beloved Rest.'

I feel two worlds : one ends and one begins.  
Methinks I dwell in both ; being much here,  
But more hereafter : even as when the nurse  
Doth give the babe into the mother's arms,  
And she who hath not quite resigned, and she  
Who hath not all received, support in twain  
The single burden ; ne'ertheless the babe

Already tastes its mother. Lord, I come.  
Thy signs are in me. 'He shall wipe away  
All tears : ' Thou see'st my tears are wiped away.  
'There shall be no more pain : ' Lord, it is done,  
Here there is no more pain. 'The sun no more  
Shall be their light by day : ' even so, Lord,  
I need no light of sun or moon ! My heart  
Is as a lamp of jasper, crystal-clear,  
Dark when Thy light is out, but lit with Thee  
The sun may be a suckling at this breast,  
And milk a nobler glory. Lord, I know  
Mine hour. This painful world, that was of thorns,  
Is roses. Like a fragrance thro' my soul  
I breathe a balm of slumber. Let me sleep.  
Bring me my easy pillows, Margery.  
I am asleep ; this oak is soft : all things  
Are rest : I sink as into bliss. O Lord,  
Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace.



*THE SODGER'S LASSIE.*

A' THE toun is to the doun  
Puin' o' the blaeberry.  
Ab's gane, Rab's gane,  
Aggie's gane, Maggie's gane,  
A' the toun is to the doun,  
An's left the house to wae and me.

Heigho the blaeberry !  
Wha'll hae a blaeberry ?  
Ah, to min' o' auld lang syne,  
Puin' o' the blaeberry !

Sodger Tam, he cam an' cam,  
Puin' o' the blaeberry ;  
Still I went, an' still I bent,  
Puin' o' the blaeberry.

Berries high, an' berries low,  
Heigho the blaeberry !  
Tam maun come where berries grow,  
Puin' o' the blaeberry.

Heigho the blaeberry !  
Wha'll hae a blaeberry ?  
Ah, to min' o' auld lang syne,  
Puin' o' the blaeberry !

Never ance I looked at Tam,  
Heigho the blaeberry !  
Weel I kent him when he cam,  
Puin' o' the blaeberry.

Baith our faces to the groun',  
Puin' o' the blaeberry,  
Tam cam near without a soun',  
Heigho the blaeberry !

Wow ! but we were near, I ween,  
Puin' o' the blaeberry !  
A' the air was warm between,  
Heigho the blaeberry !

Could a lassie think o' ill,  
Puin' o' the blaeberry ?  
Berries e'en grow where they will,  
Heigho the blaeberry !

Berries here, an' berries there,  
Heigho the blaeberry !  
I was kissed or I was ware,  
Puin' o' the blaeberry.

Wha wad fash wi' ane anither  
Puin' o' the blaeberry ?  
Berries whiles will grow thegither,  
Heigho the blaeberry !

I was kissed or I could speer,  
Heigho the blaeberry !  
Hech ! that folk sud come sae near,  
A' to pu' a blaeberry !

While I grat and chid forbye,  
Heigho the blaeberry !  
Doun we sat—I ken na why—  
A' amang the blaeberry.

Heigho the blaeberry !  
Wha 'll hae a blaeberry ?  
Oh, to min' o' auld lang syne,  
A' amang the blaeberry !

Sidelong Tam he cam an' cam  
A' amang the blaeberry.  
Wha could tell he meant na fair ?  
Weel I ken I chid him sair,  
But that day we gaed na mair  
Puin' o' the blaeberry !

Heigho the blaeberry !  
Wha 'll hae a blaeberry ?  
Oh, to min' o' auld lang syne,  
Doun amang the blaeberry !

*LADY CONSTANCE.*

My Love, my Lord,  
 I think the toil of glorious day is done.  
 I see thee leaning on thy jewelled sword,  
 And a light-hearted child of France  
 Is dancing to thee in the sun,  
 And thus he carols in his dance.

‘ Oh, a gallant sans peur  
 Is the merry chasseur,  
 With his fanfaron horn and his rifle ping-pang !  
 And his grand havresack  
 Of gold on his back,  
 His pistol cric-crac !  
 And his sword cling-clang !

‘ Oh, to see him blithe and gay  
 From some hot and bloody day,  
 Come to dance the night away till the bugle blows “ au  
     rang,”  
 With a wheel and a whirl  
 And a wheeling waltzing girl,

And his bow, "place aux dames!" and his oath "feu et sang!"

And his hop and his fling  
Till his gold and silver ring

To the clatter and the clash of his sword cling-clang!

'But hark,  
Thro' the dark,  
Up goes the well-known shout!  
The drums beat the turn out!  
Cut short your courting, Monsieur l'Amant!  
Saddle! mount! march! trot!  
Down comes the storm of shot,  
The foe is at the charge! En avant!

'His jolly havresack  
Of gold is on his back,  
Hear his pistol cric-crac! hear his rifle ping-pang!

'Vive l'Empereur!  
And where's the Chasseur?

'He's in  
Among the din  
Steel to steel cling-clang!'

And thou within the doorway of thy tent  
Leanest at ease with careless brow unbent,

Watching the dancer in as pleased a dream  
As if he were a gnat i' the evening gleam,  
And thou and I were sitting side by side  
Within the happy bower  
Where oft at this same hour  
We watched them the sweet year I was a bride.

My Love, my Lord,  
Leaning so grandly on thy jewelled sword,  
Is there no thought of home to whisper thee,  
None can relieve the weary guard I keep,  
None wave the flag of breathing truce for me,  
Nor sound the hours to slumber or to weep ?  
Once in a moon the bugle breaks thy rest,  
I count my days by trumpets and alarms :  
Thou liest down in thy warcloak and art blest,  
While I, who cannot sleep but in thine arms,  
Wage night and day fresh fields unknown to fame,  
Arm, marshal, march, charge, fight, fall, faint, and die,  
Know all a soldier can endure but shame,  
And every chance of warfare but to fly.  
I do not murmur at my destiny :  
It can but go with love, with whom it came,  
And love is like the sun—his light is sweet,  
And sweet his shadow—welcome both to me !  
Better for ever to endure that hurt  
Which thou canst taste but once than once to lie  
At ease when thou hast anguish. Better I

Be often sad when thou art gay than gay  
One moment of thy sorrow. Tho' I pray  
Too oft I shall win nothing of the sky  
But my unfilled desire and thy desert  
Can take it and still lack. Oh, might I stay  
At the shut gates of heaven ! that so I meet  
Each issuing fate, and cling about his feet  
And melt the dreadful purpose of his eye,  
And not one power pass unimpleaded by  
Whose bolt might be for thee ! Aye, love is sweet  
In shine or shade ! But love hath jealousy,  
That knowing but so little thinks so much !  
And I am jealous of thee even with such  
A fatal knowledge. For I wot too well  
In the set season that I cannot tell  
Death will be near thee. This thought doth deflower  
All innocence from time. I dare not say  
'Not now,' but for the instant cull the hour,  
And for the hour reap all the doubtful day,  
And for the day the year : and so, forlorn,  
From morn till night, from startled night till morn,  
Like a blind slave I bear thine heavy ill  
Till thy time comes to take it : come when 't will  
The broken slave will bend beneath it still.

*HOW'S MY BOY?*

‘ Ho, Sailor of the sea !

How's my boy—my boy ?’

‘ What's your boy's name, good wife,

And in what good ship sailed he ? ’

‘ My boy John—

He that went to sea—

What care I for the ship, sailor?

My boy's my boy to me.

‘ You come back from sea.’

And not know my John ?

I might as well have asked some landsman

Yonder down in the town.

There's not an ass in all the parish

But he knows my John.

‘ How's my boy—my boy ?

And unless you let me know

I'll swear you are no sailor,

Blue jacket or no,



Brass buttons or no, sailor,  
Anchor and crown or no !  
Sure his ship was the "Jolly Briton"'.  
'Speak low, woman, speak low !'  
'And why should I speak low, sailor,  
About my own boy John ?  
If I was loud as I am proud  
I'd sing him over the town !  
Why should I speak low, sailor ?'  
'That good ship went down.'

'How's my boy—my boy ?  
What care I for the ship, sailor,  
I was never aboard her ?  
Be she afloat or be she aground,  
Sinking or swimming, I'll be bound  
Her owners can afford her !  
I say, how's my John ?'  
'Every man on board went down,  
Every man aboard her.'  
'How's my boy—my boy ?  
What care I for the men, sailor ?  
I'm not their mother—  
How's my boy—my boy ?  
Tell me of him and no other !  
How's my boy—my boy ?'

*FAREWELL.*

CAN I see thee stand  
On the looming land?  
Dost thou wave with thy white hand  
Farewell, farewell?  
I could think that thou art near,  
Thy sweet voice is in mine ear,  
Farewell, farewell!  
While I listen, all things seem  
Singing in a singing dream,  
Farewell, farewell!  
Echoing in an echoing dream,  
Farewell, farewell!

Yon boat upon the sea,  
It floats 'twixt thee and me,  
I see the boatman listless lie;  
He cannot hear the cry  
That in mine ears doth ring  
Farewell, farewell!  
Doth it pass him o'er and o'er,  
Heard upon the shore behind,

Farewell, farewell !  
Heard upon the ship before,  
Farewell, farewell !  
Like an arrow that can dart  
Viewless thro' the viewless wind,  
Plain on the quivering string,  
And plain in the victim's heart ?

Are there voices in the sky,  
Farewell, farewell ?  
Am I mocked by the bright air,  
Farewell, farewell ?  
The empty air that everywhere  
Silters back the sung reply,  
Farewell, farewell !  
While to and fro the tremulous accents fly,  
Farewell, farewell !  
Now shown, now shy,  
Farewell, farewell !  
Now song, now sigh,  
Farewell, farewell !  
Toy with the grasping heart that deems them nigh,  
Come like blown bells in sudden wind and high,  
Or far on furthest verge in lingering echoes die,  
Farewell, farewell !  
Farewell, farewell, farewell !

Oh, Love ! what strange dumb Fate

Hath broken into voice to see us hope?  
Surely we part to meet again?  
Like one struck blind, I grope  
In vain, in vain ;  
I cannot hold a single sense to tell  
The meaning of this melancholy bell,  
Farewell, farewell !

I touch them with my thought, and small and great  
They join the swaying swell,  
Farewell, farewell !  
Farewell, farewell, farewell !

Aye, when I felt thee falling  
On this heaving breast—  
Aye, when I felt thee prest  
Nearer, nearer, nearer,  
Dearer, dearer, dearer—  
Aye, while I saw thy face,  
In that long last embrace,  
The first, the last, the best—  
Aye, while I held thee heart to heart,  
My soul had pushed off from the shore,  
And we were far apart ;  
I heard her calling, calling,  
From the sea of nevermore  
Farewell, farewell !  
Fainter, fainter, like a bell  
Rung from some receding ship,

Farewell, farewell !  
The far and further knell  
Did hardly reach my lip,  
Farewell, farewell !  
Farewell, farewell, farewell !

Away, you omens vain !  
Away, away !  
What ! will you not be driven ?  
My heart is trembling to your augury.  
Hence ! Like a flight of seabirds at a gun,  
A thousand ways they scatter back to Heaven,  
Wheel lessening out of sight, and swoop again as one !  
Farewell, farewell !  
Farewell, farewell, farewell !

Oh, Love ! what fatal spell  
Is winding, winding round me to this singing ?  
What hands unseen are flinging  
The tightening mesh that I can feel too well ?  
What viewless wings are winging  
The siren music of this passing bell ?  
Farewell, farewell !  
Farewell, farewell, farewell !

Arouse my heart ! arouse !  
This is the sea : I strike these wooden walls :  
The sailors come and go at my command :

I lift this cable with my hand :  
I loose it and it falls :  
Arouse ! she is not lost,  
Thou art not plighted to a moonlight ghost,  
But to a living spouse.  
Arouse ! we only part to meet again !  
Oh thou moody main,  
Are thy mermaid cells a-ringing ?  
Are thy mermaid sisters singing ?  
The saddest shell of every cell  
Ringing still, and ringing  
Farewell, farewell !  
To the sinking sighing singing,  
To the floating flying singing,  
To the deepening dying singing,  
In the swell,  
Farewell, farewell !  
And the failing wailing ringing,  
The reaming dreaming ringing  
Of fainter shell in deeper cell,  
To the sunken sunken singing,  
Farewell, farewell !  
Farewell, farewell !  
Farewell, farewell, farewell ?

*THE MILKMAID'S SONG.*

TURN, turn, for my cheeks they burn,  
Turn by the dale, my Harry !  
Fill pail, fill pail,  
He has turned by the dale,  
And there by the stile waits Harry.  
Fill, fill,  
Fill pail, fill,  
For there by the stile waits Harry !  
The world may go round, the world may stand still,  
But I can milk and marry,  
Fillpail,  
I can milk and marry.

Wheugh, wheugh !  
Oh, if we two  
Stood down there now by the water,  
I know who'd carry me over the ford  
As brave as a soldier, as proud as a lord,  
Tho' I don't live over the water.  
Wheugh, wheugh ! he 's whistling thro,'

He's whistling 'the farmer's daughter.'  
Give down, give down,  
My crumpled brown !  
He shall not take the road to the town,  
For I'll meet him beyond the water.  
Give down, give down,  
My crumpled brown !  
And send me to my Harry.  
The folk o' towns  
May have silken gowns,  
But I can milk and marry,  
Fillpail,  
I can milk and marry.

Wheugh, wheugh ! he has whistled thro',  
He has whistled thro' the water.  
Fill, fill, with a will, a will,  
For he's whistled thro' the water,  
And he's whistling down  
The way to the town,  
And it's not 'the farmer's daughter !'  
Churr, churr ! goes the cockchafer,  
The sun sets over the water,  
Churr, churr ! goes the cockchafer,  
I'm too late for my Harry !  
And, oh, if he goes a-soldiering,  
The cows they may low, the bells they may ring,  
But I'll neither milk nor marry,



Fillpail,  
Neither milk nor marry.

My brow beats on thy flank, Fillpail,  
Give down, good wench, give down !  
I know the primrose bank, Fillpail,  
Between him and the town.  
Give down, good wench, give down, Fillpail,  
And he shall not reach the town !  
Strain, strain ! he 's whistling again,  
He's nearer by half a mile.  
More, more ! Oh, never before  
Were you such a weary while !  
Fill, fill ! he's crossed the hill,  
I can see him down by the style,  
He's passed the hay, he 's coming this way,  
He's coming to me, my Harry !  
Give silken gowns to the folk o' towns,  
He 's coming to me, my Harry !  
There's not so grand a dame in the land,  
That she walks to-night with Harry !  
Come late, come soon, come sun, come moon,  
Oh, I can milk and marry,  
Fillpail,  
I can milk and marry.

Wheugh, wheugh ! he has whistled thro',  
My Harry ! my lad ! my lover !

Set the sun and fall the dew,  
Heigho, merry world, what's to do  
That you 're smiling over and over ?  
Up on the hill and down in the dale,  
And along the tree-tops over the vale  
Shining over and over,  
Low in the grass and high on the bough,  
Shining over and over,  
Oh, world, have you ever a lover ?  
You were so dull and cold just now,  
Oh, world, have you ever a lover ?  
I could not see a leaf on the tree,  
And now I could count them, one, two, three,  
Count them over and over,  
Leaf from leaf like lips apart,  
Like lips apart for a lover.  
And the hill-side beats with my beating heart,  
And the apple-tree blushes all over,  
And the May bough touched me and made me start,  
And the wind breathes warm like a lover.

Pull, pull ! and the pail is full,  
And milking's done and over.  
Who would not sit here under the tree ?  
What a fair fair thing 's a green field to see !  
Brim, brim, to the rim, ah me !  
I have set my pail on the daisies !

Quarrel who quarrel, and fight who fight,  
But I'll bring my pail home every night  
To love, and home, and Harry !  
We 'll drink our can, we'll eat our cake,  
There 's beer in the barrel, there 's bread in the bake,  
The world may sleep, the world may wake,  
But I shall milk and marry,  
And marry,  
I shall milk and marry.

*THE GERMAN LEGION.*

In the cot beside the water,  
In the white cot by the water,  
The white cot by the white water,  
There they laid the German maid.

There they wound her, singing round her,  
Deftly wound her, singing round her,  
Softly wound her, singing round her,  
In a shroud like a cloud.

And they decked her as they wound her,  
With a wreath of leaves they bound her,  
Lornest leaves they scattered round her,  
Singing grief with every leaf.

Singing grief with every leaf,  
Sadder grief with sadder leaf,  
Sweeter leaf with sweeter grief,  
So 't was sung in a dark tongue.

Like a latter lily lying,  
O'er whom falling leaves are sighing,  
And Autumn vapours crying,  
Pale and cold on misty mould,

So I saw her sweet and lowly,  
Shining shining pale and holy,  
Thro' the dim woe slowly slowly,  
Said and sung in that dark tongue.

Such an awe her beauty lent her,  
While they sang I dared not enter  
That charmed ring where she was centre,  
But I stood with stirring blood

Till the song fell like a billow,  
And I saw them leave her pillow,  
And go forth to the far willow,  
For the wreath of virgin death.

And I stood beside her pillow,  
While they plucked the distant willow,  
And my heart rose like a billow  
As I said to the pale dead—

' Oh, thou most fair and sweet virginity,  
Of whom this heart that beats for thee doth know  
Nor name nor story, that these limbs can be

For no man evermore, that thou must go  
Cold to the cold, and that no eye shall see  
That which thine unsolved womanhood doth owe  
Of the incommunicable mystery  
Shakes me with tears. I could kneel down by thee,  
And o'er thy chill unmarriageable rest  
Cry, "Thou who shalt no more at all be prest  
To any heart, one moment come to this!  
And feel me weeping with thy want of bliss,  
And all the unpraised beauties of thy breast—  
Thy breast which never shall a lover kiss!"

Then I slowly left her pillow,  
For they came back with the willow,  
And my heart sinks as a billow  
Doth implore towards the shore,

As I see the crown they weave her,  
And I know that I must leave her,  
And I feel that I could grieve her  
Sad and sore for evermore.

And again they sang around her,  
In a richer robe they wound her,  
With the willow wreath they bound her,  
And the loud song like a cloud

Of golden obscuration,  
With the strange tongue of her nation,  
Filled the house of lamentation,  
Till she lay in melody,

Like a latter kily lying,  
O'er whom falling leaves are sighing,  
And the Autumn vapours crying,  
In a dream of evening gleam.

And I saw her sweet and lowly,  
Shining shining pale and holy,  
Thro' the dim woe slowly slowly  
Said and sung in a dark tongue.

In the cot beside the water,  
The white cot by the white water,  
English cot by English water  
That shall see the German sea.

*A HEALTH TO THE QUEEN.*

WHILE the thistle bears  
Spears,  
And the shamrock is green,  
And the English rose  
Blows,  
A health to the Queen !  
A health to the Queen, a health to the Queen !  
Fill high, boys, drain dry, boys,  
A health to the Queen !

The thistle bears spears round its blossom,  
Round its blossom the shamrock is green,  
The rose grows and glows round the rose in its bosom,  
We stand sword in hand round the Queen !  
Our glory is green round the Queen !  
We close round the rose, round the Queen !  
The Queen, boys, the Queen ! a health to the Queen !  
Fill high, boys, drain dry, boys,  
A health to the Queen !



Last post I'd a note from that old aunt of mine,  
'T was meant for a hook, but she called it a line ;  
She says, I don't know why we're going to fight,  
She's sure I don't know—and I'm sure she's quite right ;  
She swears I haven't looked at one sole protocol ;  
Tantara ! tantara ! I haven't, 'pon my soul !  
Soho, blow trumpeter,  
Trumpeter, trumpeter !  
Soho, blow trumpeter, onward's the cry !  
Fall, tyrants, fall—the devil care why !  
A health to the Queen ; a health to the Queen !  
Fill high, boys, drain dry, boys,  
A health to the Queen !

My granny came down—'pour vous voir, mon barbare,'  
She brought in her pocket a map—du Tartare—  
Drawn up, so she vowed, 'par un homme ah ! si bon !'  
With a plan for campaigning old Hal, en haut ton.  
With here you may trick him, and here you may prick him,  
And here—if you do it en roi—you may lick him,  
But there he is sacred, and yonder—Oh, la !  
He's as dear a sweet soul as your late grandpapa !  
Soho, blow trumpeter,  
Trumpeter, trumpeter !  
Blow the charge, trumpeter, blare, boy, blare !  
Fall, tyrants, fall—the devil care where !  
A health to the Queen, a health to the Queen !

Fill high, boys, drain dry, boys,  
A health to the Queen !

My cousin, the Yankee, last night did his best  
To prove ' the Czar —bless you's—no worse than the rest.'  
We wheeled the decanters out on to the lawn,  
And he argued—and spat—in a circle till dawn.  
Quoth I, ' If the game's half as thick as you say,  
The more need for hounds, lad ! Hunt's up ! Harkaway !'  
Soho, blow trumpeter !  
Trumpeter, trumpeter !  
Tally-ho, trumpeter, over the ditch—  
Over the ditch, boys, the broad ditch at Dover !  
Hands slack, boys, heels back, boys,  
Yohoicks ! we're well over !  
Soho, blow, trumpeter ! blow us to cover !  
Blow, boy, blow,  
Berlin, or Moscow,  
Schœnbrun, or Rome,  
So Reynard's at home,  
The devil care which !  
Hark, Evans ! hark, Campbell ! hark, Cathcart !—Halloo !  
Heydey, harkaway ! good men and true !  
Harkaway to the brook,  
You won't land in clover !  
Leap and look !  
High and dry !  
Tantivy, full cry !

Full cry up the hill !  
Hurrah, and it's over !  
A burst and a kill.  
While the thistle bears  
Spears,  
And the shamrock is green,  
And the English rose  
Blows,  
A health to the Queen !  
A health to the Queen, a health to the Queen !  
Fill high, boys, drain dry, boys,  
A health to the Queen !  
The Queen, boys, the Queen ! the Queen, boys, the  
Queen !  
Full cry, high and dry, boys,  
A to the Queen !

*WOE IS ME.*

FAR in the cradling sky,  
Dawn opes his baby eye,  
Then I awake and cry,  
Woe is me !

Morn, the young hunter gay,  
Chases the shadows gray,  
Then I go forth and say,  
Woe is me !

Noon ! drunk with oil and wine,  
Tho' not a grief is thine,  
Yet shalt thou shake with mine !  
Woe is me !

Eve kneeleth sad and calm,  
Bearing the martyr's palm ;  
I shriek above her psalm,  
Woe is me !

Night, hid in her black hair  
From eyes she cannot dare,  
Lies loud with fierce despair ;  
Then I sit silent where  
She cries from her dark lair  
Woe is me !

*THE YOUNG MAN'S SONG.*

At last the curse has run its date !  
The heavens grow clear above,  
And on the purple plains of Hate,  
We'll build the throne of Love !

One great heroic reign divine  
Shall mock the Elysian isles,  
And love in arms shall only shine  
Less fair than Love in smiles !

Old Clio, burn thine ancient scroll,  
The scroll of Rome and Greece !  
Our war shall be a parable  
On all the texts of peace,

And saints look down, with eyes of praise,  
Where on our modern field  
The new Samaritan forelays  
The wrongs that other healed !

What virtue is beyond our prize ?  
What deed beneath yon sun  
More Godlike than the prodigies  
We mortal men have done ?

We wearied of the lagging steed,  
The dove had not a quill  
To fledge the imaginable speed  
Of our wild shaft of will ;

‘ Ah, could each word be winged with wind,  
And speech be swift as sight ! ’  
We cursed the long arms of that blind  
Dumb herald on the height,

Dark struggling with a mystery  
He daily hid in shades,  
As a ghost steams up on the eye,  
Begins a Fate and fades.

‘ If, like a man, dull space could hear !  
If, like a man, obey ! ’  
We seized this earthly hemisphere,  
This senseless skull of clay.

We drew from Heaven a breath of flame,  
And thro’ the lifeless whole  
Did breathe it till the orb became  
One brain of burning soul.

As he o'er whom a tyrant reigns,  
It waits our sovran word,  
And thinks along the living veins  
The lightnings of its lord !

What Force can meet our matchless might ?  
What Power is not our slave ?  
We bound the angel of the light,  
We scourged him in a cave.

And when we saw the prisoner pine  
For his immortal land,  
We wrung a ransom, half divine,  
From that celestial hand

Whose skill the heavy chain subdued,  
And all a captive's woe  
Did tame to such a tempered good  
As mortal eyes can know.

Who comes, who comes, o'er mountains laid,  
Vales lifted, straightened ways ?  
'Tis he ! the mightier horse we made  
To serve our nobler days !

But now, unheard, I saw afar  
His cloud of windy mane,  
Now, level as a blazing star,  
He thunders thro' the plain !



The life he needs, the food he loves,  
This cold earth bears no more ;  
He foddors on the eternal groves  
That heard the dragons roar,

Strong with the feast he roars and runs,  
And, in his maw unfurled,  
Evolves the folded fires of suns  
That lit a grander world !

Yon bird, the swiftest in the sky,  
Before him sprang, but he  
Has passed her as a wind goes by  
A struggler in the sea.

With forward beak and forward blows,  
She slides back from his side ;  
While ever as the monster goes,  
With needless power and pride,

Disdainful from his fiery jaws  
He snorts his vital heat,  
And, easy as his shadow, draws  
Long-drawn, the living street.

He 's gone ! Methinks that over him,  
Like Curtius in the abyss,  
I see great gulphs close rim to rim,  
And Past and Future kiss !

Oh, Man! as from the flood sublime  
Some alp rose calm and slow,  
So from the exhaling floods of time  
I see thy stature grow.

Long since thy royal brow, uncrowned,  
Allegiant nature saw,  
Long since thine eye of empire frowned  
The heavenly thrones to awe ;

And now the monarch's breast apart  
Divides the sinking spray,  
Fit dome for such gigantic heart  
As warms so vast a sway.

Far o'er the watery wilds I see  
Thy great right-arm upsurge,  
Thy right-hand, armed with victory,  
Is sunburst on the verge !

Arise, arise ! oh, sword ! and sweep  
One universal morn !  
Another throe, thou labouring Deep,  
And all the god is born !

So sang a youth of glorious blood.  
Below, the wind-hawk shook her wings,  
And lower, in its kingdom, stood  
A tower of ancient kings.

Above, the autumn sky was blue,  
Far round the golden world was fair,  
And, gun by gun, the ramparts blew  
A battle on the air.

*DEAD-MAID'S-POOL.*

OH water, water—water deep and still,  
In this hollow of the hill,  
Thou helenge well o'er which the long reeds lean,  
Here a stream and there a stream,  
And thou so still, between,  
Thro' thy coloured dream,  
Thro' the drownèd face  
Of this lone leafy place,  
Down, down, so deep and chill,  
I see the pebbles gleam!

Ash-tree, ash-tree,  
Bending o'er the well,  
Why there thou bendest,  
Kind hearts can tell.  
'Tis that the pool is deep,  
'Tis that—a single leap,  
And the pool closes :  
And in the solitude  
Of this wild mountain wood,

None, none, would hear her cry,  
From this bank where she stood  
To that peak in the sky  
Where the cloud dozes.

Ash-tree, ash-tree,  
That art so sweet and good,  
If any creeping thing  
Among the summer games in the wild roses  
Fall from its airy swing,  
(While all its pigmy kind  
Watch from some imminent rose-leaf half uncurled)—  
I know thou hast it full in mind  
(While yet the drowning minim lives,  
And blots the shining water where it strives),  
To touch it with a finger soft and kind, '  
As when the gentle sun, ere day is hot,  
Feels for a little shadow in a grot,  
And gives it to the shades behind the world.

And oh ! if some poor fool  
Should seek the fatal pool,  
Thine arms —ah, yes ! I know  
For this thou watchest days, and months, and years,  
For this dost bend beside  
The lone and lorn well-side,  
The guardian angel of the doom below,

Content if, once an age, thy helping hand  
May lift repentant madness to the land :  
Content to hear the cry  
Of living love from lips that would have died :  
To seem awhile endowed  
With all thy limbs did save,  
And in that voice they drew out of the grave,  
To feel thy dumb desire for once released aloud,  
And all thy muffled century  
Repaid in one wild hour of sobs, and smiles, and tears.

Aye, aye, I envy thee,  
Pitiful ash-tree !

Water, water—water deep and still,  
In the hollow of the hill,  
Water, water, well I wot,  
Thro' the weary hours,  
Well I wot thee lying there,  
As fair as false, as false as fair.  
The crows they fly o'er,  
The small birds flit about,  
The stream it ripples in, the stream it ripples out,  
But what eye ever knew  
A rinkle wimple thee ?  
And what eye shall see  
A rinkle wimple thee  
Evermore ?  
Thro' thy gauds and mocks,

All thy thin enchantment thro'—  
The green delusion of thy bowers,  
The cold flush of thy feignèd flowers,  
All the treacherous state  
Of fair things small and great,  
That are and are not,  
Well I wot thee shining there,  
As fair as false, as false as fair.  
Thro' the liquid rocks,  
Thro' the watery trees,  
Thro' the grass that never grew,  
Thro' a face God never made,  
Thro' the frequent gain and loss  
Of the cold cold shine and shade,  
Thro' the subtle fern and moss,  
Thro' the humless, hiveless bees,  
Round the ghosts of buds asleep,  
Thro' the disembodied rose,  
Waving, waving in the deep,  
Where never wind blows,  
I look down, and see far down,  
In clear depths that do nothing hide,  
Green in green, and brown in brown,  
The long fish turn and glide!

Ash-tree, ash-tree,  
Bending o'er the water—  
Ash-tree, ash-tree,  
Hadst thou a daughter?

Ash-tree, ash-tree, let me draw near,  
Ash-tree, ash-tree, a word in thine ear !

Thou art wizen and white, ash-tree ;  
Other trees have gone on,  
Have gathered and grown,  
Have bourgeoned and borne :  
Thou hast wasted and worn.

Thy knots are all eyes ;  
Every knot a dumb eye,  
That has seen a sight  
And heard a cry.

Thy leaves are dry :  
The summer has not gone by,  
But they're withered and dead,  
Like locks round a head  
That is bald with a secret sin,  
That is scorched by a hell within.

Thy skin  
Is withered and wan,  
Like a guilty man :  
It was thin,  
Aye, silken and thin,  
It is houghed  
And ploughed,  
Like a murderer's skin.



Thou hast no shoots nor wands,  
All thy arms turn to the deep,  
All thy twigs are crooked,  
Twined and twisted,  
Fingered and fisted,  
Like one who had looked  
On wringing hands  
'Till his hands were wrung in his sleep.

Pardon my doubt of thee,  
What is this  
In the very groove  
Of thy right arm ?  
There is not a snake  
So yellow and red,  
There is not a toad  
So sappy and dread !  
It doth not move,  
It doth not hiss—  
Ash-tree—for God's sake—  
Hast thou known  
What hath not been said  
And the summer sun  
Cannot keep it warm,  
And the living wood  
Cannot shut it down !  
And it grows out of thee  
And will be told,

Bloody as blood,  
And yellow as gold !

Ash-tree, ash-tree,  
'That once wert so green !  
Ash-tree, ash-tree !  
What hast thou seen ?  
Was I a mother—nay or aye ?  
Am I childless—aye nor nay ?  
Ash-tree, ash-tree,  
Bending o'er the water !  
Ash-tree, ash-tree,  
Give me my daughter !  
Curse the water,  
Curse thee,  
Ash-tree,  
Bending o'er the water !  
Leaf on the tree,  
Flower on the stem,  
Curse thee,  
And curse them !  
'Trunk and shoot,  
Herb and weed,  
Bud and fruit,  
Blossom and seed,  
Above and below,  
About and about,  
Inside and out,

Grown and to grow,  
Curse you all,  
Great and small,  
That cannot give back my daughter !

But if there were any,  
Among so many,  
Any small thing that did lie sweet for her,  
Any newt or marish-worm that, shrinking  
Under the pillow of the water weed,  
Left her a cleaner bed,  
Any least leaves that fell with little splashes,  
And sinking, sinking,  
Sank soft and slow, and settled on her lashes,  
And did what was so meet for her,  
Them I do not curse.

See, see up the glen,  
The evening sun agen !  
It falls upon the water,  
It falls upon the grass,  
Thro' the birches, thro' the firs,  
Thro' the alders, catching gold,  
Thro' the bracken and the brier,  
Goes the evening fire  
To the bush-linnet's nest.

There between us and the west,

Dost thou see the angels pass ?  
Thro' the air, with streaming hair,  
The golden angels pass ?  
Hold, hold ! for mercy, hold !  
I know thee ! ah, I know thee !  
I know thou wilt not pass me so—  
The gray old woman is ready to go.  
Call me to thee, call me to thee,  
My daughter ! oh, my daughter !

*THE SAILOR'S RETURN.*

THIS morn I lay a-dreaming,  
This morn, this merry morn,  
When the cock crew shrill from over the hill,  
I heard a bugle horn.

And thro' the dream I was dreaming,  
There sighed the sigh of the sea,  
And thro' the dream I was dreaming,  
This voice came singing to me.

‘ High over the breakers,  
Low under the lee,  
Sing ho  
The billow,  
And the lash of the rolling sea!

Boat, boat, to the billow,  
Boat, boat, to the lee!  
Love on thy pillow,  
Art thou dreaming of me?

‘ Billow, billow, breaking,  
Land us low on the lee !  
For sleeping or waking,  
Sweet love, I am coming to thee !

‘ High, high, o’er the breakers,  
Low, low, on the lee,  
Sing ho !  
The billow  
That brings me back to thee !’

*THE WIDOW'S LULLABY.*

SHE droops like a dew-dropping lily,  
 ' Whisht thee, boy, whisht thee, boy Willie !  
 Whisht whisht o' thy wailing, whisht thee, boy Willie ! '

The sun comes up from the lea,  
 As he who will never come more  
 Came up that first day to her door,  
 When the ship furled her sails by the shore,  
 And the spring leaves were green on the tree.

But she droops like a dew-dropping lily,  
 ' Whisht thee, boy, whisht thee, boy Willie !  
 Whisht whisht o' thy wailing, whisht thee, boy Willie ! '

The sun goes down in the sea,  
 As he who will never go more  
 Went down that last day from her door,  
 When the ship set her sails from the shore,  
 And the dead leaves were sere on the tree.

But she droops like a dew-dropping lily,  
 ' Whisht thee, boy, whisht thee, boy Willie !  
 Whisht whisht o' thy wailing, whisht thee, boy Willie ! '

The year comes glad o'er the lea,  
As he who will never come more,  
Never, ah never!  
Came up that first day to her door,  
When the ship furled her sails by the shore,  
And the spring leaves were green on the tree.  
Never, ah never !  
He who will come again, never !

But she droops like a dew-dropping lily,  
' Whisht thee, boy, whisht thee, boy Willie !  
Whisht whisht o' thy wailing, whisht thee, boy Willie ! '

The year goes sad to the sea,  
As he who will never go more  
For ever went down from her door,  
Ever, for ever !  
When the ship set her sails by the shore,  
And the dead leaves were sere on the tree.  
Ever, for ever !  
For ever went down from her door.

But she droops like a dew-dropping lily,  
' Whisht thee, boy, whisht thee, boy Willie !  
Whisht whisht o' thy wailing, whisht thee, boy Willie ! '

A gun, and a flash, and a gun,  
The ship lies again where she lay !



High and low, low and high, in the sun,  
There 's a boat, a boat on the bay !  
High and low, low and high, in the sun,  
All as she saw it that day,  
When he came who shall never come more,  
And the ship furled her sails by the shore.

But she droops like a dew-dropping lily,  
' Whisht thee, boy, whisht thee, boy Willie !  
Whisht whisht o' thy wailing, whisht thee, boy Willie !'

All as she saw it that day,  
With a gun, and a flash, and a gun,  
The ship lies again where she lay,  
And they run, and they ride, and they run,  
Merry, merry, merry, down the merry highway,  
To the boat, high and low in the sun.  
Nearer and nearer she hears the rolling drum,  
Clearer and clearer she hears the cry, ' They come,'  
Far and near runs the cheer to her ear once so dear,  
Merry, merry, merry, up the merry highway,  
As it ran when he came that day  
And said, ' Wilt thou be my dearie ?  
Oh, wilt thou be my dearie ?  
My boat is dry in the bay,  
And I 'll love till thou be weary !'  
And she could not say him nay,  
For his bonny eyes o' blue,  
And never was true-love so true,

To never so kind a dearie,  
As he who will never love more,  
When the ship furls her sails by the shore.

Then she shakes like a wind-stricken lily,  
'Whisht thee, boy, whisht thee, boy Willie !  
Whisht whisht o' thy wailing, whisht thee, boy Willie !'

*THE GABERLUNZIE'S WALK.*

The Laird is dead, the laird is dead,  
 An' dead is cousin John,  
 His henchmen ten, an' his sax merrie men,  
 Forbye the steward's son.

An' his ain guid gray that he strode sae gay  
 When hunt was up an' on,  
 An' the win' blew fair, an' the grews pu'd sair,  
 An' dawn was on Maol-don,  
 An' the skeigh steeds neigh'd, an' the slot-hounds bay'd,  
 An' up gaed the mornin' sun,  
 An' awa' gaed the deer wi' the merrie men's cheer,  
 Awa' owre the auld Maol-don,  
 An' awa' wi' a shout ran the rabble an' the rout,  
 An' awa' rode cousin John,  
 Wi' his horn, his horn, thro' the merry merry morn,  
 His hunter's horn sae shrill !  
 An' 't was ' Ho, heigho, hereawa',  
 Hereawa', hereawa' !  
 Ho, heigho, hereawa' !'  
 A' roun' the hill !

Walie ! walie ! they're a' gane dead,  
A' owre the seas an' awa'  
The laird an' his men, the sax an' the ten,  
They gaed to fight and to fa'.  
An' walie, an' wae, an' hech ! the weary day !  
The laird is dead an' a' !

A' in ae grave by the margent o' the wave  
Thegither they lay down,  
Sax feet deep, where dead men sleep,  
A' i' the faeman's grun'.

Foremost i' the van, wi' his bagpipes i' his han',  
The steward's ae braw son,  
An' next the young laird—gin the guid Lord had spared !-  
A' as he led them on,  
Wi' his bonnie brow bare an' his lang fair hair,  
An' his bluidy braid-sword drawn ;  
An' hard by his chief, that in life was sae lief,  
In death cam cousin John,  
Wi' his horn, his horn, thro' the merry merry morn,  
His hunter's horn sae shrill  
When 't was ' Ho, heigho, hereawa',  
Hereawa', hereawa' !  
Ho, heigho, hereawa' ! '  
A' roun' the hill !

Cin ony uphould the young Laird lies cauld,  
An' cauld lies cousin John,

Sax feet deep, as dead men sleep,  
A' i' the faeman's grun,'  
A' in ae grave by the margent o' the wave,  
Where doun they lay that day,  
Wi' the henchmen ten, an' the sax merrie men,  
Ask the gaberlunzie gray.  
Step an' step, step an' step, gaed the gaberlunzie gray,  
Faint an' lame, wi' empty wame, he hirples on his way.  
Step an' step, step an' step, an' owre the hill maun he,  
His head is bent, his pipe is brent, he has na a bawbec.  
Step an' step, step an' step, he totters thro' the mirk,  
He hears the fox amang the cocks, the houlet by the  
kirk.  
Step an' step, step an' step, an' as he climbs the hill  
The auld auld moon is gaun doun ; the nicht grows cauld  
an' still,  
The breathin' kye aroun' him lie, the ingle-light is gane,  
He wakes the yowes amang the knowes, an' still he gangs  
his lane.  
His slow steps rouse the blethrin' grouse, the peewit fa's  
an' squeals,  
The nicht-goat bleats amang the peats, an' still he speils  
an' speils,  
Step an' step, step an' step, an' up the craigie stark,  
An' mony a stane ane after ane gangs snirtlin' doun the  
dark.  
Step an' step, step an' step, that gaberlunzie gray,  
A' win's seem tint far far ahint as he gangs on his way.

He hears the burn amang the fern, he hears the stoatie  
cheep,

He hears the rustle, an' flit an' fussle, as the kae shifts  
her roost in her sleep.

Step an' step, step an' step, he gangs wi' troubled breath,  
He feels the silence a' aboon, he feels the warl beneath ;  
Wheet an' wheet about his feet the startit mousie ran,  
An' as he gaes his riskin' claes aye gar him start an' stan' ;  
An' as he stan's wi' knotted han's, an' leans his chitterin'  
head,

He hears the sod his steps have trod a-tirlin' to his tread ;  
An' crisp foot-fa', an' sibblin sma' o' stealthy cony  
crappin',

An' click o' bat aboon his hat, like fairy fingers snappin',  
An' ilka yird that ticked an' stirred, where swairdie there  
is nae,

As elfin shoos the tittlin' mools gar'd rinkle down the  
brae ;

An' safer soun' alang the groun' the grass-taps thro' an'  
thro',

Gin owre the fiel's the wee bit chiel's were dealin' out the  
dew.

Step an' step, step an' step, an' hech ! his freezin' bluid !

He gaes into the silence as ane gaes into a wood.

The mair the height, mair still the nicht, an' faster did he  
gang,

Step an' step, an' then a step, an' he listens hard an'  
lang!

He listens twice, he listens thrice, but why he disna ken ;  
His cauld skin skeared, an' clipped his beard ; he stops  
an' lists agen.

There's somethin' creepin' thro' his banes, there's some-  
thin' stirs his hair :

'Tis mair than use, he canna choose, he listens ten times  
mair !

He pits his pack fra his auld back, he sits him on a stane,  
His eyelids fa', he gapes his jaw, an' harks wi' might an'  
main,

The mair he list the mair uprist his gray-locks wi' affright,  
Till ilka hair that he might wear was stiff an' stark up-  
right.

His sick heart stops, the low moon drops, the nicht is  
eerie chill !

Wi' sudden shout the dead cry out, like hunters at a kill,  
Full cry, full cry, the win's sweep by, a horn, a horn is  
shrill !

An' 't is ' Ho, heigho, hereawa',

Hereawa', hereawa' !

Ho, heigho, hereawa' !'

A' roun' the hill !

*LIBERTY TO M. LE DIPLOMATE.*

Thou fool who treatest with the sword, and not  
With the strong arm that wields it ! Thou insane  
Who seest the dew-drops on the lion's mane,  
But dost forget the lion ! Oh thou sot,  
Hugging thy drunken dream ! Thou idiot  
Who makest a covenant against the rain  
With autumn leaves ! Thou atheist who dost chain  
This miserable body that can rot,  
And thinkest it Me ! Fool ! for the swordless arm  
Shall strike thee dead. Madman, the lion wakes,  
And with one shake is dry. Sot, the day breaks  
Shall sober even thee. Idiot, one storm  
And thou art bare. Atheist, the corse is thine,  
But lo, the unfettered soul immortal and divine !



*AN EVENING DREAM.*

I'm leaning where you loved to lean in eventides of old,  
The sun has sunk an hour ago behind the treeless wold,  
In this old oriel that we loved how oft I sit forlorn,  
Gazing, gazing, up the vale of green and waving corn.  
The summer corn is in the ear, thou knowest what I see  
Up the long wide valley, and from seldom tree to tree,  
The serried corn, the serried corn, the green and serried  
corn,  
From the golden morn till night, from the moony night  
till morn.  
I love it, morning, noon, and night, in sunshine and in rain,  
For being here it seems to say, 'The lost come back  
again.'  
And being here as green and fair as those old fields we  
knew,  
It says, 'The lost when they come back, come back un-  
changed and true.'  
But more than at the shout of morn, or in the sleep of  
noon,  
Smiling with a smiling star, or wan beneath a wasted  
moon,

I love it, soldier brother! at this weird dim hour, for  
then

The serried ears are swords and spears, and the fields are  
fields of men.

Rank on rank in faultless phalanx stern and still I can  
discern,

Phalanx after faultless phalanx in dumb armies still and  
stern ;

Army on army, host on host, till the bannered nations  
stand,

As the dead may stand for judgment silent on the o'er-  
peopled land.

Not a bayonet stirs : down sinks the awful twilight, durn  
and dun,

On an age that waits its leader, on a world that waits the  
sun.

Then your dog—I know his voice—cries from out the  
courtyard nigh,

And my love too well interprets all that long and  
mournful cry !

In my passion that thou art not, lo ! I see thee as thou  
art,

And the pitying fancy brings thee to assuage the an-  
guished heart.

‘ Oh my brother ! ’ and my bosom’s throb of welcome at  
the word,

Claps a hundred thousand hands, and all my legions hail  
thee lord.

And the vast unmotioned myriads, front to front, as at a  
breath,  
Live and move to martial music, down the devious dance  
of death.  
Ah, thou smilest, scornful brother, at a maiden's dream of  
war !  
And thou shakest back thy locks as if—a glow-worm for  
thy star—  
I dubbed thee with a blade of grass, by earthlight, in a  
fairy ring,  
Knight o' the garter o' Queen Mab, or lord in waiting to  
her king.  
Brother, in thy plumed pride of tented field and turretted  
tower,  
Smiling brother, scornful brother, darest thou watch with  
me one hour ?  
Even now some fate is near, for I shake and know not  
why,  
And a wider sight is orbiting, orbiting, on my moistened  
eye,  
And I feel a thousand flutterings round my soul's still  
vacant field,  
Like the ravens and the vultures o'er a carnage yet un-  
killed.  
Hist ! I see the stir of glamour far upon the twilight  
wold,  
Hist ! I see the vision rising ! List ! and as I speak  
behold !

These dull mists are mists of morning, and behind yon  
eastern hill,

The hot sun abides my bidding : he shall melt them  
when I will.

All the night that now is past, the foe hath laboured for  
the day,

Creeping thro' the stealthy dark, like a tiger to his prey.  
Throw this window wider ! Strain thine eyes along the  
dusky vale !

Art thou cold with horror ? Has thy bearded cheek  
grown pale ?

'Tis the total Russian host, flooding up the solemn plain,  
Secret as a silent sea, mighty as a moving main !

Oh, my country ! is there none to rouse thee to the  
rolling sight ?

Oh thou gallant sentinel who has watched so oft so well,  
must thou sleep this only night ?

So hath the shepherd lain on a rock above a plain,  
Nor beheld the flood that swelled from some embowelled  
mount of woe,

Waveless, foamless, sure and slow,

Silent o'er the vale below,

Till nigher still and nigher comes the seeth of fields on fire,  
And the thrash of falling trees, and the steam of  
rivers dry,

And before the burning flood the wild things of the wood  
Skulk and scream, and fight, and fall, and flee, and  
fly.

A gun! and then a gun! I' the far and early sun

Dost thou see by yonder tree a fleeting redness rise,  
As if, one after one, ten poppies red had blown,

And shed in a blinking of the eyes?

They have started from their rest with a bayonet at each  
breast,

Those watchers of the west who shall never watch  
again!

'Tis nought to die, but oh, God's pity on the woe

Of dying hearts that know they die in vain!

Beyond yon backward height that meets their dying sight,  
A thousand tents are white, and a slumbering army  
lies.

'Brown Bess,' the sergeant cries, as he loads her while  
he dies,

'Let this devil's deluge reach them, and the good old  
cause is lost.'

He dies upon the word, but his signal gun is heard,

Yon ambush green is stirred, yon labouring leaves  
are tost,

And a sudden sabre waves, and like dead from opened  
graves,

A hundred men stand up to meet a host.

Dumb as death, with bated breath,

Calm upstand that fearless band,

And the dear old native land, like a dream of  
sudden sleep,

Passes by each manly eye that is fixed so stern and dry

On the tide of battle rolling up the steep.

They hold their silent ground, I can hear each fatal  
sound

Upon that summer mound which the morning sun-  
shine warms,

The word so brief and shrill that rules them like a will,  
The sough of moving limbs, and the clank and ring  
of arms.

'Fire !' and round that green knoll the sudden war-  
clouds roll,

And from the tyrant's ranks so fierce an answ'ring  
blast

Of whirling death came back that the green trees turned  
to black,

And dropped their leaves in winter as it passed.

A moment on each side the surging smoke is wide,  
Between the fields are green, and around the hills  
are loud,

But a shout breaks out, and lo ! they have rushed upon  
the foe,

As the living lightning leaps from cloud to cloud.

Fire and flash, smoke and crash,

The fogs of battle close o'er friends and foes, and they  
are gone !

Alas, thou bright-eyed boy ! alas, thou mother's joy !

With thy long hair so fair, thou didst so bravely lead  
them on !

I faint with pain and fear. Ah, heaven ! what do I  
hear ?

A trumpet-note so near ?

What are these that race like hunters at a chase?

Who are these that run a thousand men as one?

What are these that crash the trees far in the waving  
rear?

Fight on, thou young hero! there's help upon the way!

The light horse are coming, the great guns are coming,

The Highlanders are coming;—good God give us  
the day!

Hurrah for the brave and the leal! Hurrah for the strong  
and the true!

Hurrah for the helmets of steel! Hurrah for the bonnets  
o' blue!

A run and a cheer, the Highlanders are here! a gallop  
and a cheer, the light horse are here!

A rattle and a cheer, the great guns are here!

With a cheer they wheel round and face the foe!

As the troopers wheel about, their long swords are out,

With a trumpet and a shout, in they go!

Like a yawning ocean green, the huge host gulphs them  
in,

But high o'er the rolling of the flood,

Their sabres you may see like lights upon the sea

When the red sun is going down in blood.

Again, again, again! And the lights are on the wane!

Ah, Christ! I see them sink, light by light,

As the gleams go one by one when the great sun is  
down,

And the sea rocks in foam beneath the night.

Aye, the great sun is low, and the waves of battle flow  
O'er his honoured head ; but, oh, we mourn not he  
is down,  
For to-morrow he shall rise to fill his country's eyes,  
As he sails up the skies of renown !  
Ye may yell, but ye shall groan !  
Ye shall buy them bone for bone !  
Now, tyrant, hold thine own ! blare the trumpet, peal the  
drum !  
From yonder hill-side dark, the storm is on you !  
Hark !  
Swift as lightning, loud as thunder, down they come !  
As on some Scottish shore, with mountains frowning o'er,  
The sudden tempests roar from the glen,  
And roll the tumbling sea in billows to the lee,  
Came the charge of the gallant Highlandmen !  
And as one beholds the sea tho' the wind he cannot see,  
But by the waves that flee knows its might,  
So I tracked the Highland blast by the sudden tide that  
past  
O'er the wild and rolling vast of the fight.  
Yes, glory be to God ! they have stemmed the foremost  
flood !  
I lay me on the sod and breathe again !  
In the precious moments won, the bugle call has gone  
To the tents where it never rang in vain,  
And lo, the landscape wide is red from side to side,  
And all the might of England loads the plain !



Like a hot and bloody dawn, across the horizon drawn,  
While the host of darkness holds the misty vale,  
As glowing and as grand our bannered legions stand,  
And England's flag unfolds upon the gale !  
At that great sign unfurled, as morn moves o'er the  
world  
When God lifts His standard of light,  
With a tumult and a voice, and a rushing mighty noise,  
Our long line moves forward to the fight.  
Clarion and clarion defying,  
Sounding, resounding, replying,  
Trumpets braying, pipers playing, chargers neighing,  
Near and far  
The to and fro storm of the never-done hurraing,  
Thro' the bright weather banner and feather rising and  
falling, bugle and fife  
Calling, recalling—for death or for life—  
Our host moved on to the war,  
While England, England, England, England, England !  
Was blown from line to line near and far,  
And like the morning sea, our bayonets you might see,  
Come beaming, gleaming, streaming,  
Streaming, gleaming, beaming,  
Beaming, gleaming, streaming, to the war.  
Clarion and clarion defying,  
Sounding, resounding, replying,  
Trumpets braying, pipers playing, chargers neighing,  
Near and far

The to and fro storm of the never-done hurrahing,  
Thro' the bright weather, banner and feather rising and  
falling, bugle and fife  
Calling, recalling—for death or for life—  
Our Tong line moved forward to the war.<sup>1</sup>

*IN WAR-TIME.*

## A PSALM OF THE HEART.

SCOURGE us as Thou wilt, oh Lord God of Hosts ;  
 Deal with us, Lord, according to our transgressions ;  
 But give us Victory !  
 Victory, victory ! oh, Lord, victory !  
 Oh, Lord, victory ! Lord, Lord, victory !

Lift Thy wrath up from the day of battle,  
 And set it on the weight of other days !  
 Draw Thy strength from us for many days,  
 So Thou be with us on the day of battle,  
 And give us victory.  
 Victory, victory ! oh, Lord, victory !  
 Oh, Lord, victory ! Lord, Lord, victory !

Let the strong arm be as the flag o' the river,  
 The withered flag that flappeth o'er the river,  
 When all the flood is dried out of the river ;

Let the brave heart be as a drunkard's bosom,  
 When the thick fume is frozen in the bosom,  
 And the bare sin lies shivering in the bosom ;

Let the bold eye be sick and crazed with midnight,  
Strained and cracked with aching days of midnight,  
Swarmed and foul with creeping shapes of midnight ;

So Thou return upon the day of battle,  
So we be strong upon the day of battle,  
Be drunk with Thee upon the day of battle,  
So Thou shine o'er us in the day of battle,  
Shine in the faces of our enemies,  
Hot in the faces of our enemies,  
Hot o'er the battle and the victory.  
Victory, victory ! oh, Lord, victory !  
Oh, Lord, victory ! Lord, Lord, victory !

Shame us not, oh Lord, before the wicked !  
In our hidden places let Thy wrath  
Afflict us ; in the secret of our sin  
Convince us ; be the bones within our flesh  
Marrowed with fire, and all the strings of life  
Strung to the twang of torture ; let the stench  
Of our own strength torment us ; the desire  
Of our own glorious image in the sea  
Consume us ; shake the darkness like a tree,  
And fill the night with mischiefs,—blights and dwales,  
Weevils, and rots, and cankers ! But, oh Lord,  
Humble us not upon the day of battle,  
Hide not Thy face upon the day of battle,  
Let it shine o'er us on the day of battle,

Shine in the faces of our enemies,  
Hot in the faces of our enemies,  
Hot o'er the battle and the victory !  
Victory, victory ! oh, Lord, victory !  
Oh, Lord, victory ! Lord, Lord, victory !

Tho' Thou shouldst glorify us above measure,  
Yet will we not forget that Thou art God !  
Honour our land, oh Lord ! honour our land !

Be Thou her armour in the day of battle,  
Whereon the sword of man shall strike in vain !  
For Thou canst find the place and leave no scar,  
Sting of bee, nor fairy-spot nor mole,  
Yet kill the germ within the core of life.

Oh lead her in the glory of her beauty,  
So that the nations wonder at her beauty !  
For Thou canst take her beauty by the heart  
And throw the spout of sorrow from the fountain,  
The flood of sorrow thro' the veins of joy.

Let her soul look out of her eyes of glory,  
Lighten, oh Lord, from awful eyes of glory !  
For Thou canst touch the soul upon its throne,  
The fortified soul upon its guarded throne,  
Nor scorch the sweet air of the populous splendour  
That comes and goes about a leprous king.

Therefore fear not to bless us, oh Lord God !  
And give us victory !  
Victory, victory ! oh, Lord, victory !  
Oh, Lord, victory ! Lord, Lord, victory !

Sight of home, if Thou wilt ; kiss of love,  
If Thou wilt ; children at the knees of peace,  
If Thou wilt ; parents weeping in the door  
Of welcome, if Thou wilt ; but victory,  
Victory, victory ! oh, Lord, victory !  
Oh, Lord, victory ! Lord, Lord, victory !

Pangs if Thou wilt, oh Lord ! Death if Thou wilt !  
Labour and famine, frost and fire and storm,  
Silent plague, and hurricane of battle,  
The field-grave, and the wolf-grave, and the sea !  
But victory, victory ! oh, Lord, victory !  
Oh, Lord, victory ! Lord, Lord, victory !

Consider, Lord, the oppressions of the oppressor,  
And give us victory !  
The tyrant sitteth on his golden throne  
In palaces of silver, to his gates  
The meeting winds blow good from all the world.  
Who hath undone the mountain where he locks  
His treasure ? In the armoury of hell  
Which engine is not his ? His name infects  
The air of every zone, and to each tongue

From Hecla to the Ganges adds a word  
That kills all terms of pride. His servants sit  
In empires round his empire ; and outspread  
As land beneath the water, oh, my God,  
His kingdoms bear the half of all Thy stars !  
Who hath out-told his princes ? Who hath summed  
His captains ? From the number of his hosts  
He should forget a nation and not lack !  
Therefore, oh Lord God, give us victory !

The serf is in his hut ; the unsacred sire  
Who can beget no honour. Lo his mate  
Dim thro' the reeking garlic—she whose womb  
Doth shape his ignorant shame, and whose young slave  
In some far field thickens a knouted hide  
For baser generations. Their dull eyes  
Are choked with feudal welfare ; their rank limbs  
Steam in the sty of plenty ; their rude tongues,  
That fill the belly from the common trough,  
Discharge in gobbets of as gross a speech  
That other maw the heart. Nor doth the boor  
Refuse his owner's chattel tho' she breed  
The rich man's increase, nor doth she disdain  
The joyless usage of such limbs as toil  
Yoked with the nobler ox, and take as mute  
A beast's infliction ; at her stolid side  
The girl that shall be such a thing as she,  
Suckles the babe she would not, with the milk

A bondmaid owes her master. Lord, Thou seest!  
'Therefore, oh Lord God, give us victory!

The captive straineth at the dungeon-grate.  
Behold, oh Lord, the secret of the rock,  
The dungeon, and the captive, and the chain!  
Tho' it be hidden under forest leaves,  
Tho' it be on the mountains among clouds,  
Tho' they point to it as a crag o' the hill,  
And say concerning it that the wind walleth,  
Thou knowest the inner secret and the sin!  
I see his white face at the dungeon bars,  
As snow between the bars of winter trees.  
He sinketh down upon the dungeon stones,  
His white face making light within the dungeon,  
The claspèd whiteness of his praying hands  
Flickering a little light within the dungeon.  
And thro' the darkness, thro' the cavern darkness,  
Like to a runnel in a savage wood,  
Sweet thro' the horror of the hollow dark  
He sings the song of home in the strange land.

How long, oh Lord of thunder? Victory!  
Lord God of vengeance, give us victory!  
Victory, victory! oh, Lord, victory!  
Oh, Lord, victory! Lord, Lord, victory!



*A SHOWER IN WAR-TIME.*

RAIN, rain, sweet warm rain,  
 On the wood and on the plain !  
 Rain, rain, warm and sweet,  
 Summer wood lush leafy and loud,  
 With note of a throat that ripples and rings,  
 Sad sole sweet from her central seat,  
 Bubbling and trilling,  
 Filling, filling, filling  
 The shady space of the green dim place  
 With an odour of melody,  
 Till all the noon is thrilling,  
 And the great wood hangs in the balmy day  
 Like a cloud with an angel in the cloud,  
 And singing because she sings !

In the sheltering wood,  
 At that hour I stood ;  
 I saw that in that hour  
 Great round drops, clear round drops,  
 Grew on every leaf and flower,  
 And its hue so fairly took

And faintly, that each tinted elf  
Trembled with a rarer self,  
Even as if its beauty shook  
With passion to a tenderer look.

Rain, rain, sweet warm rain,  
On the wood and on the plain !  
Rain, rain, warm and sweet,  
Summer wood lush leafy and loud,  
With note of a throat that ripples and rings,  
Sad sole sweet from her central seat,  
Bubbling and trilling,  
Filling, filling, filling  
The shady space of the green dim place  
With an odour of melody,  
Till all the noon is thrilling,  
And the great wood hangs in the balmy day,  
Like a cloud with an angel in the cloud,  
And singing because she sings !

Then out of the sweet warm weather  
There came a little wind sighing, sighing :  
Came to the wood sighing, and sighing went in,  
Sighed thro' the green grass, and o'er the leaves brown,  
Sighed to the dingle, and, sighing, lay down,  
While all the flowers whispered together.  
Then came swift winds after her who was flying,  
Swift bright winds with a jocund din,

Sought her in vain, her boscage was so good,  
And spread like baffled revellers thro' the wood.  
Then, from bough, and leaf, and bell,  
The great round drops, the clear round drops,  
In fitful cadence drooped and fell—  
Drooped and fell as if some wanton air  
Were more apparent here and there,  
Sphered on a favourite flower in dewy kiss,  
Grew heavy with delight and dropped with bliss.

Rain, rain, sweet warm rain,  
On the wood and on the plain ;  
Rain, rain, still and sweet,  
For the winds have hushed again,  
And the nightingale is still,  
Sleeping in her central seat.  
Rain, rain, summer rain,  
Silent as the summer heat.  
Doth it fall, or doth it rise ?  
Is it incense from the hill,  
Or bounty from the skies ?  
Or is the face of earth that lies  
Languid, looking up on high,  
To the face of Heaven so nigh  
That their balmy breathings meet ?

Rain, rain, summer rain,  
On the wood and on the plain :

Rain, rain, rain, until  
The tall wet trees no more athirst,  
As each chalice green doth fill,  
See the pigmy nations nurst  
Round their distant feet, and throw  
The nectar to the herbs below.  
The droughty herbs, without a sound,  
Drink it ere it reach the ground.

Rain, rain, sweet warm rain,  
On the wood and on the plain,  
And round me like a dropping well,  
The great round drops they fell and fell.

I say not War is good or ill ;  
Perchance they may slay, if they will,  
Who killing love, and loving kill.

I do not join yon captive's din ;  
Some man among us without sin  
Perhaps may rightly lock him in.

I do not grant the Tyrant's plea ;  
The slaves potential to be free  
Already are the Powers that be.

Whether our bloodsheds flow or cease,  
I know that as the years increase,  
The flower of all is human peace.

'The Flower.' Vertumnus hath repute  
O'er Flora ; yet methinks the fruit  
But alter ego of the root ;

And that which serves our fleshly need,  
Subserves the blossom that doth feed  
The soul which is the life indeed.

Nor well he deems who deems the rose  
Is for the roseberry, nor knows  
The roseberry is for the rose.

And Autumn's garnered treasury,  
But prudent Nature's guarantee  
That Summer evermore shall be,

And yearly, once a year, complete  
That top and culmen exquisite  
Whereto the slanting seasons meet.

Whether our bloodsheds flow or cease,  
I know that, as the years increase,  
The flower of all is human peace.

'The flower.' Yet whether shall we sow  
A blossom or a seed ? I know  
The flower will rot, the seed will grow.

By this the rain had ceased, and I went forth  
From that Dodona green of oak and beech.  
But ere my steps could reach  
The hamlet, I beheld along the verge  
A flight of fleeing cloudlets that did urge  
Unequal speed, as when a herd is driven  
By the recurring pulse of shoutings loud.  
I saw ; but held the omen of no worth.  
For by the footway not a darnel stirred,  
And still the noon slept on, nor even a bird  
Moved the dull air ; but, at each silent hand,  
Upon the steaming land  
The hare lay basking, and the budded wheat  
Hung slumberous heads of sleep.  
Then I was 'ware that a great northern cloud  
Moved slowly to the centre of the heaven.  
His white head was so high  
That the great blue fell round him like the wide  
And ermined robe of kings. He sat in pride  
Lonely and cold ; but methought when he spied  
From that severe inhospitable height  
The distant dear delight,  
The meiting world with summer at her side,  
His pale brow mellowed with a mournful light,  
And like a marble god he wept his stony tears.  
The loyal clouds that sit about his feet,  
All in their courtier kinds,  
Do weep to see him weep.

After the priceless drops the sycophant winds  
Leap headlong down, and chase, and swirl, and sweep  
Beneath the royal grief that scarce may reach the ground.  
To see their whirling zeal,  
Unlikely things that in the kennel lie  
Begin to wheel and wheel;  
The wild tarantula-will spreads far and nigh,  
And spinning straws go spiral to the sky,  
And leaves long dead leap up and dance their ghastly  
round.

And so it happened in the street  
'Neath a broad eave I stood and mused again,  
And all the arrows of the driving rain  
Were tipped with slanting sleet.  
I mused beneath the straw pent of the bricked  
And sodded cot, with damp moss mouldered o'er,  
The bristled thatch gleamed with a carcanet,  
And from the inner eaves the reeking wet  
Dripped ; dropping more  
And more, as more the sappy roof was sapped,  
And wept a mirkier wash that splashed and clapped  
The plain-stones, dribbling to the flooded door.  
A plopping pool of droppings stood before,  
Worn by a weeping age in rock of easy grain.  
O'erhead, hard by, a pointed beam o'erlapped,  
And from its jewelled tip  
The slipping slipping drip  
Did whip the flippied pool whose hopping plashes ticked.'

Let one or thousands loose or bind,  
That land's enslaved whose sovran mind  
Collides the conscience of mankind.

And free—whoever holds the rood—  
Where Might in Right, and Power in Good,  
Flow each in each, like life in blood.

The age has broken from his kings !  
Stop him ! Behold his feet have wings.  
Upon his back the hero springs.

Tho' Jack's horse run away with Jack,  
Who knows, while Jack keeps on his back,  
If Jack rule him or he rule Jack ?

Cuckoo takes the mud away !  
True the sun doth shine all day ;  
Cuckoo takes the mud away.

Who sneers at heirloom rank ? God knows  
Each man that lives, each flower that blows.  
There may be lords—and a blue rose.

Even to the sod whereon you prate  
This land is ours. Do you debate  
How we shall manage our estate ?



Norman, War granted you your lease :  
The very countersign of Peace  
Shows the first Lessor can release.

Therefore altho' you cannot guide,  
Be wise ; and spare the almighty pride  
Of that mild monster that you ride.

—  
If England's head and heart were one,  
Where is that good beneath the sun  
Her noble hands should leave undone !

Small unit, hast thou hardness  
To bid mankind to battle ? Yes.  
The worm will rout them, and is less.

The world assaults ? Nor fight nor fly.  
Stand in some steadfast truth, and eye  
The stubborn siege grow old and die.

My army is mankind. My foe  
The very meanest truth I know.  
Shall I come back a conqueror ? No.

Wouldst light ? See Phosphor shines confest,  
Turn thy broad back upon the west ;  
Stand firm. The world will do the rest.

Stand firm. Unless thy strength can climb  
Yon alp, and from that height sublime  
See, ere we see, the advancing time.

Act for to-day? Friend, this 'to-day'  
Washed Adam's feet and streams away  
Far into yon Eternity.

Build as men steer, by chart and pole ;  
Care for each stone as each were sole,  
Yet lay it conscious of the whole.

Sow with the signs. The wise man heeds  
The seasons. Capricornus feeds  
Upon the sluggard's winter seeds.

Each enterprise, or small or great,  
Hath its own touchhole ; watch and wait,  
Find that and fire the loaded fate.

Do in few acts whate'er thou dost ;  
Let thy oe play to his own cost,  
Who moves the oftenest errs the most.

Choose arms from Nature's armouries,  
Plagues, conflagrations, storms, and seas,  
For God is surety for all these.

Our town is threatened by a bear,  
We've manned the thresholds far and near,  
Fools ! send five men to kill the bear.

Do good to him that hates thee. Good,  
Still good. By physic or by food ?  
By letting or by stanching blood ?

Do as thou wouldst be done by. See  
What it were well he did to thee,  
He pure as thou, thou foul as he.

Lovest thou not Peace ? Aye, moralist,  
Both Peace and thee. Yet well I wist  
They who shut Janus did slay Christ.

*IN WAR-TIME.*

## A PRAYER OF THE UNDERSTANDING.

Lo, this is night. Hast thou, oh sun, refused  
Thy countenance, or is thy golden arm  
Shortened, or from thy shining place in heaven  
Art thou put down and lost? Neither hast thou  
Refused thy constant face, nor is thine arm  
Shortened, nor from thy principality  
Art thou deposed, oh sun. Ours, ours, the sin,  
The sorrow. From thy steadfast noon we turned  
Into the eastern shade—and this is night.

Yet so revolves the axle of the world,  
And by that brief aversion wheels us round  
To morn, and rolls us on the larger paths  
Of annual duty. Thou observant moon,  
That dancest round the seasonable earth  
As David round the ark, but half thy ring  
In process, yet, complete, the circular whole  
Promotes thee, and expedes thy right advance,  
And all thy great desire of summer signs.

And thou, oh sun, our centre, who thyself  
Art satellite, and, conscious of the far  
Archelion, in obedience of free will  
And native duty, as the good man walks  
Among the children's faces, with thine house  
About thee, least and greatest, first and last,  
Makest of the blue eternal holiday  
Thy glad perambulation ; and thou, far  
Archelion, feudatory still, of one  
Not sovran nor in fee of paramount power ;  
Moons round your worlds, worlds round your suns, suns  
round

Such satraps as in orderly degree  
Confess a lordlier regent and pervade  
A vaster cycle—ye, so moved, commoved,  
Revolving and convolving, turn the heavens  
Upon the pivot of that summery star,  
Centre of all we know : and thou, oh star,  
Centre of all we know, chief crown of crowns,  
Who art the one in all, the all in one,  
And seest the ordered whole—nought uninvolved  
But all involved to one direct result  
Of multiform volution—in one pomp,  
One power, one tune, one time, upon one path  
Move with thee moving, Thou, amid thy host  
Marchest—ah whither ?

---

Oh God, before Whom  
We marshal thus Thy legioned works to take

The secret of Thy counsel, and array  
Congress and progress, and, with multitude  
As conquerors and to conquer, in consent  
Of universal law, approach Thy bound,  
Thine immemorial bound, and at Thy face  
Heaven and earth flee away ; oh Thou Lord God,  
Whether, oh absolute existence, Thou,  
The Maker, makest, and this fair we see  
Be but the mote and dust of that unseen  
Unsought unsearchable ; or whether Thou  
Whose goings forth are from of old, around  
Thy going in mere effluence without care  
Breathest creation out into the cold  
Beyond Thee, and, within Thine ambient breath,  
So walkest everlasting as we walk  
The unportioned snows ; or whether, meditating  
Eternity, self-centred, self-fulfilled,  
Self-continent, Thou thinkest and we live,  
A little while forgettest and we fade,  
Rememberest and we are, and this bright vision  
Wherein we move, nay all our total sum  
And story, be to Thee as to a man  
When in the drop and rising of a lid  
Lo the swift rack and fashion of a dream,  
No more ; oh Thou inscrutable, whose ways  
Are not as ours, whose form we know not, voice  
Hear not, true work behold not, mystery  
Conceive not, who—as thunder shakes the world

And rings a silver bell--hast sometime moved  
The tongue of man, but in Thy proper speech  
Wearest a human language on a word  
As limpets on a rock, who, as Eternal,  
Omnipotent, Infinite, Allwise,  
In measure of Thine operation hast  
No prime or term, in subject as in scheme  
No final end, in idol as in act  
Nought but the perfect God ; oh Thou Supreme,  
Inaudible, Invisible, Unknown,  
Thy will be done.

*A HERO'S GRAVE.*

O'ER our evening fire the smoke is like a pall,  
And funeral banners hang about the arches of the hall,  
In the gable end I see a catafalque aloof,  
And night is drawn up like a curtain to the girders of the  
roof.

Thou knowest why we silent sit, and why our eyes are  
dim,  
Sing us such proud sorrow as we may hear for him.

Reach me the old harp that hangs between the flags he  
won,  
I will sing what once I heard beside the grave of such a  
son.

My son, my son,  
A father's eyes are looking on thy grave,  
Dry eyes that look on this green mound and see  
The low weed blossom and the long grass wave,  
Without a single tear to them or thee,  
My son, my son.



Why should I weep? The grass is grass, the weeds  
Are weeds. The emmet hath done thus ere now.  
I tear a leaf; the green blood that it bleeds  
Is cold. What have I here? Where, where, art thou,  
My son, my son?

On which tall trembler shall the old man lean?  
Which chill leaf shall lap o'er him when he lies  
On that bed where in visions I have seen  
Thy filial love? or, when thy father dies,  
Tissue a fingered thorn to close his childless eyes?

Aye, where art thou? Men tell me of a fame  
Walking the wondering nations; and they say,  
When thro' the shouting people thy great name  
Goes like a chief upon a battle-day,  
They shake the heavens with glory. Well-away!

As some poor hound that thro' thronged street and square  
Pursues his loved lost lord, and fond and fast  
Seeks what he feels to be but feels not where,  
Tracks the dear feet to some closed door at last,  
And lies him down and lornest looks doth cast,

So I, thro' all the long tumultuous days,  
Tracing thy footstep on the human sands,  
O'er the signed deserts and the vocal ways  
Pursue thee, faithful, thro' the echoing lands,  
Wearing a wandering staff with trembling hands:

'Thro' echoing lands that ring with victory,  
And answer for the living with the dead,  
And give me marble when I ask for bread,  
And give me glory when I ask for thee—  
It was not glory I nursed on my knee.

And now, one stride behind thee, and too late,  
Yet true to all that reason cannot kill,  
I stand before the inexorable gate  
And see thy latest footstep on the sill,  
And know thou canst not come, but watch and wait thee  
still.

'Old man!'—Ah, darest thou? yet thy look is kind,  
Didst thou, too, love him? 'Thou grey-headed sire,  
Seest thou this path which from that grave doth wind  
Far thro' those western uplands higher and higher,  
Till, like a thread, it burns in the great fire

'Of sunset? The wild sea and desert meet  
Eastward by yon unnavigable strand,  
Then wherefore hath the flow of human feet  
Left this dry runnel of memorial sand  
Meandering thro' the summer of the land?

'See where the long immeasurable snake,  
Between dim hall and hamlet, tower and shed,  
Mountain and mountain, precipice and lake,  
Lies forth unfinished to this final head,  
'This green dead mound of the unfading dead!'

Do they then come to weep thee? Do they kiss  
Thy relics? Art thou then as wholly gone  
As some old buried saint? My son, my son,  
Ah, could I mourn thee so! Such tears were bliss!  
'Old man, they do not mourn who weep at graves like  
this.'

They do not mourn? What! hath the insolent foe  
Found out my child's last bed? Who, who, are they  
That come and go about him? I cry, 'Who?'  
I am his father—I;—I cry 'Who?' 'Aye,  
Gray trembler, I will tell thee who are they.

'The slave who, having grown up strong and stark  
To the set season, feels at length he wears  
Bonds that will break, and thro' the slavish dark  
Shines with the light of liberated years,  
And still in chains doth weep a freeman's tears.

'The patriot, while the unebbed force that hurled  
His tyrant throbs within his bursting veins,  
And, on the ruins of a hundred reigns,  
That ancient heaven of brass, so long unfurled,  
Falls with a crash of fame that fills the world,  
And thro' the clangor lo the unwonted strains  
Of peace, and, in the new sweet heavens upcurled,  
The sudden incense of a thousand plains.

‘ Youth whom some mighty flash from heaven hath turned  
In his dark highway, and who runs forth, shod  
With flame, into the wilderness untrod,  
And as he runs his heart of flint is burned,  
And in that glass he sees the face of God,  
And falls upon his knees—and morn is all abroad.

‘ Age who hath heard amid his cloistered ground  
The cheer of youth, and steps from echoing aisles,  
And at a sight the great blood with a bound  
Melts his brow’s winter, which the free sun smiles  
To jewels, and he stands a young man crowned  
With glittering years among a young world shouting  
round.

‘ Girls that do blush and tremble with delight  
On the St. John’s eve of their maidenhood ;  
When the unsummered woman in her blood  
Glow through the Parian maid, and at the sight  
The flushing virgin weeps and feels herself too bright.

‘ He who first feels the world-old destiny,  
The shaft of gold that strikes the poet still,  
And slowly in its victim melts away,  
Who knows his wounds will heal but when they kill,  
And drop by vital drop doth bleed his golden ill.

‘ All whom the everpassing mysteries  
Have rapt above the region of our race,  
And, blinded by the glory and the grace,  
Break from the ecstatic sphere—as he who dies  
In darkness, and in heaven’s own light doth rise,  
Dazed with the untried glory of the place  
Looks up and sees some well-remembered face,  
And thro’ the invulnerable angels flies  
To that dear human breast and hides his dazzled eyes.

‘ All who, like the sun-ripened seed that springs  
And bourgeons in the sun, do hold profound  
An antenatal stature, which the round  
Of the dull continent flesh hath cribbed and wound  
Into this kernelled man ; but having found  
Such soil as grew them, burst in blossomings  
Not native here, or, from the hallowed ground,  
Tower their slow height, and spread, like sheltering wings,  
Those boughs wherein the bird of omen sings  
High as the palms of heaven, while to the sound  
Lo kingdoms jocund in the sacred bound  
Till the world’s summer fills her moon, and brings  
The final fruit which is the feast and fate of kings.

‘ And dar’st thou mourn? Thy bones are left behind,  
But where art thou, Anchises? Dost thou see  
Him who once bare the slow paternity,  
Foot-burnt o’er stony Troy? So, thou, reclined

Goest thro' the falling years. Here, here where we  
Two stand, lies deep the flesh thou hast so pined  
To clasp, and shalt clasp never. Verily,  
Love and the worm are often of one mind !  
God save them from election ! Pity thee ?  
True he lifts not thy load, but he hath signed  
And at his beck a nation rose up free ;  
Thy wounds his living love may never bind,  
But at the dead man's touch posterity  
Is healed. To thee, thou poor, and halt, and blind,  
He is a staff no more : but times to be  
Lean on his monumental memory  
As the moon on a mountain. Thou shalt find  
A silent home, a cheerless hearth : but he  
Shall be a fire which the enkindling wind,  
Blowing for ever from eternity,  
Fans till its universal blaze hath shined  
The yule of thankful ages. Pity thee ?  
A son is lost to thine infirmity ;  
Poor fool, what then ? A son thou hast resigned  
To give a father to the virtues of mankind.'

*IN WAR-TIME.*

## AN ASPIRATION OF THE SPIRIT.

LORD JESUS, as a little child,  
    Upon some high ascension day  
    When a great people goes to pay  
Allegiance, and the tumult wild

Roars by its thousand streets, and fills  
    The billowy nation on the plain,  
    As roar into the heaving main  
A thousand torrents from the hills,

Caught in the current of the throng  
    Is drawn beneath the closing crowd,  
    And, drowning in the human flood,  
Is whirled in its dark depths along ;

And low under the ruthless feet,  
    Or high as to the awful knees  
    Of giants that he partly sees,  
Blinded with fear and faint with heat,

Mindless of all but what doth seem,  
And shut out from the upper light,  
Maddens within a monstrous night  
Of limbs that crush him like a dream ;

And when his strength no more can stand,  
And while he sinks in his last swoond,  
Is lifted from the deadly ground,  
And led by a resistless hand,

And thro' the opening agony  
Goes on and knows not where, beside  
The mastery of his guardian guide,  
Goes on, and knows not where nor why,

Till, when the sky no more is hid,  
Between the rocking heads he sees  
A mount that rises by degrees  
Above them like a pyramid,

And on the summit of the mount  
A vacant throne, and round the throne  
Bright-vestured princes, zone by zone,  
In circles that he cannot count,

And feels, at length, a slanting way,  
And labours by his guardian good  
Till forth, as from a lessening wood,  
They step into the dazzling day,



And from the mount he sees below  
The marvel of the marshalled plain,  
And what was tumult is a reign,  
And, as he climbs, the princes know

His guide, and fall about his feet,  
Before his face the courtiers fall,  
And lo ! it is the Lord of all,  
And on his throne he takes his seat ;

And, while strong fears transfix the boy,  
The mighty people far and near  
Throw up upon the eye and ear  
The flash and thunder of their joy,

And, round the royal flag-unfurled,  
In sequent love and circling awe  
The legions lead their living law,  
And what was Chaos is a World :

So, Lord, Thou seest this mortal me,  
Deep in Titanic days that press  
Incessant from unknown access  
To issues that I cannot see.

Caught in the current stern and strong  
I sink beneath the closing crowd,  
And drowning in the awful flood  
Am whirled in its dark depths along,

Struggling with shows so thronged and thrust  
On these wide eyes which bruise and burn,  
And flash with half-seen sights, or turn  
To that worse darkness thick with dust,

That mindful of but what doth seem,  
And hopeless of the upper light,  
I madden in a monstrous night  
Of shapes that crush me like a dream.

Then when my strength no more can stand,  
And while I sink in my last swoond,  
Lo ! I am lifted from the ground,  
And led by a resistless hand ;

And thro' the opening agony  
Go on and know not where, beside  
The mastery of my guardian guide,  
Go on, and know not where or why ;

Nor, tho' I cannot see Thy brow,  
Distrust the hand I feel so dear,  
Nor question how Thou wert so near,  
Nor ask Thee whither goest Thou,

Nor whence Thy footsteps first began.  
Whence, Lord, Thou knowest : whither, Lord,  
Thou knowest : how Thou knowest. Oh Word  
That can be touched, oh Spoken Man,

Enough, enough, if Thou wilt lead,  
To know Thou knowest : enough to know  
That darkling at Thy side I go,  
And this strong hand is Thine indeed.

Yet by that side, unspent, untrod,  
Oh let me, clinging still to Thee,  
Between the swaying wonders see  
The throne upon the mount of God.

And—tho' they close before mine eye,  
And all my course is choked and shut—  
Feel Time grow steeper under foot,  
And know the final height is nigh.

And as one sees, thro' cambered straits  
Of forests, on his forward way,  
Horizons green of coloured day,  
Oh let me thro' the crowding Fates

Behold the light of skies unseen,  
Till on that sudden Capitol  
I step forth to the sight of all  
That is, and shall be, and hath been,

And Thou, O King, shalt take Thine own  
Triumphant ; and, Thy place fulfilled,  
The flaw of Nature shall be healed,  
And joyous round Thy central throne

I see the vocal ages roll,  
And all the human universe  
Like some great symphony rehearse  
The order of its perfect whole ;

And seek in vain where once I fell,  
Nor know the anarchy I knew  
In those congenial motions due  
Of this great work where all is well,

And smile, with dazzled wisdom dumb,  
—Remembering all I said and sung—  
That man asks more of mortal tongue  
Than skill to say, ‘Thy kingdom come.’

*HOME, WOUNDED.*

WHEEL me into the sunshine,  
Wheel me into the shadow,  
There must be leaves on the woodbine,  
Is the king-cup crowned in the meadow?

Wheel me down to the meadow,  
Down to the little river,  
In sun or in shadow  
I shall not dazzle or shiver,  
I shall be happy anywhere,  
Every breath of the morning air  
Makes me throb and quiver.

Stay wherever you will,  
By the mount or under the hill,  
Or down by the little river :  
Stay as long as you please,  
Give me only a bud from the trees,  
Or a blade of grass in morning dew,  
Or a cloudy violet clearing to blue,  
I could look on it for ever.

Wheel, wheel thro' the sunshine,  
Wheel, wheel thro' the shadow ;  
There must be odours round the pine,  
There must be balm of breathing kine,  
Somewhere down in the meadow.  
Must I choose? Then anchor me there  
Beyond the beckoning poplars, where  
The larch is snooding her flowery hair  
With wreaths of morning shadow.

Among the thicket hazels of the brake  
Perchance some nightingale doth shake  
His feathers, and the air is full of song ;  
In those old days when I was young and strong,  
He used to sing on yonder garden tree,  
Beside the nursery.  
Ah, I remember how I loved to wake,  
And find him singing on the self-same bough  
(I know it even now)  
Where, since the flit of bat,  
In ceaseless voice he sat,  
Trying the spring night over, like a tune,  
Beneath the vernal moon ;  
And while I listed long,  
Day rose, and still he sang,  
And all his stanchless song,  
As something falling unaware,  
Fell out of the tall trees he sang among,

Fell ringing down the ringing morn, and rang—  
Rang like a golden jewel down a golden stair.

Is it too early? I hope not.  
But wheel me to the ancient oak,  
On this side of the meadow ;  
Let me hear the raven's croak  
Loosened to an amorous note  
In the hollow shadow.  
Let me see the winter snake  
Thawing all his frozen rings  
On the bank where the wren sings.  
Let me hear the little bell,  
Where the red-wing, top-mast high,  
Looks toward the northern sky,  
And jangles his farewell.  
Let us rest by the ancient oak,  
And see his net of shadow,  
His net of barren shadow,  
Like those wrestlers' nets of old,  
Hold the winter dead and cold,  
Hoary winter, white and cold,  
While all is green in the meadow.

And when you've rested, brother mine,  
Take me over the meadow ;  
Take me along the level crown  
Of the bare and silent down,

And stop by the ruined tower.  
On its green scarp, by and by,  
I shall smell the flowering thyme,  
On its wall the wall-flower.

In the tower there used to be  
A solitary tree.  
Take me there, for the dear sake  
Of those old days wherein I loved to lie  
And pull the melilote,  
And look across the valley to the sky,  
And hear the joy that filled the warm wide hour  
Bubble from the thrush's throat,  
As into a shining mere  
Rills some rillet trebling clear,  
And speaks the silent silver of the lake.  
'There mid cloistering tree-roots, year by year,  
The hen-thrush sat, and he, her lief and dear,  
Among the boughs did make  
A ceaseless music of her married time,  
And all the ancient stones grew sweet to hear,  
And answered him in the unspoken rhyme  
Of gracious forms most musical  
That tremble on the wall  
And trim its age with airy fantasies  
That flicker in the sun, and hardly seem  
As if to be beheld were all,  
And only to our eyes



They rise and fall,  
And fall and rise,  
Sink down like silence, or a sudden stream  
As wind-blown on the wind as streams a wedding-chime.

But you are wheeling me while I dream,  
And we've almost reached the meadow!  
You may wheel me fast thro' the sunshine,  
You may wheel me fast thro' the shadow,  
But wheel me slowly, brother mine,  
Thro' the green of the sappy meadow;  
For the sun, these days have been so fine,  
Must have touched it over with celandine,  
And the southern hawthorn, I divine,  
Sheds a muffled shadow.

There blows  
The first primrose,  
Under the bare bank roses :  
There is but one,  
And the bank is brown,  
But soon the children will come down,  
The ringing children come singing down,  
To pick their Easter posies,  
And they'll spy it out, my beautiful,  
Among the bare brier-roses;  
And when I sit here again alone,  
The bare brown bank will be blind and dull,

Alas for Easter posies!  
But when the din is over and gone,  
Like an eye that opens after pain,  
I shall see my pale flower shining again;  
Like a fair star after a gust of rain  
I shall see my pale flower shining again;  
Like a glow-worm after the rolling wain  
Hath shaken darkness down the lane  
I shall see my pale flower shining again;  
And it will blow here for two months more,  
And it will blow here again next year,  
And the year past that, and the year beyond  
And thro' all the years till my years are o'er  
I shall always find it here.  
Shining across from the bank above,  
Shining up from the pond below,  
Ere a water-fly wimple the silent pond,  
Or the first green weed appear.  
And I shall sit here under the tree,  
And as each slow bud uncloses,  
I shall see it brighten and brighten to me,  
From among the leafing brier-roses,  
The leaning leafing roses,  
As at eve the leafing shadows grow,  
And the star of light and love  
Draweth near o'er her airy glades,  
Draweth near thro' her heavenly shades,  
As a maid thro' a myrtle grove.

And the flowers will multiply,  
As the stars come blossoming over the sky,  
The bank will blossom, the waters blow,  
Till the singing children hitherward hie  
To gather May-day posies ;  
And the bank will be bare wherever they go,  
As dawn, the primrose-girl, goes by,  
And alas for heaven's primroses !

Blare the trumpet, and boom the gun,  
But, oh, to sit here thus in the sun,  
To sit here, feeling my work is done,  
While the sands of life so golden run,  
And I watch the children's posies,  
And my idle heart is whispering  
' Bring whatever the years may bring,  
The flowers will blossom, the birds will sing,  
And there'll always be primroses.'

Looking before me here in the sun,  
I see the Aprils one after one,  
Primrosed Aprils one by one,  
Primrosed Aprils on and on,  
Till the floating prospect closes  
In golden glimmers that rise and rise,  
And perhaps are gleams of Paradise,  
And perhaps—too far for mortal eyes  
New years of fresh primroses,  
Years of earth's primroses,

Springs to be, and springs for me  
Of distant dim primroses.

My soul lies out like a basking hound,  
A hound that dreams and dozes ;  
Along my life my length I lay,  
I fill to-morrow and yesterday,  
I am warm with the suns that have long since set,  
I am warm with the summers that are not yet,  
And like one who dreams and dozes  
Softly afloat on a sunny sea,  
Two worlds are whispering over me,  
And there blows a wind of roses  
From the backward shore to the shore before,  
From the shore before to the backward shore,  
And like two clouds that meet and pour  
Each thro' each, till core in core  
A single self reposes,  
The nevermore with the evermore  
Above me mingles and closes ;  
As my soul lies out like the basking hound,  
And wherever it lies seems happy ground,  
And when, awakened by some sweet sound,  
A dreamy eye uncloses,  
I see a blooming world around,  
And I lie amid primroses—  
Years of sweet primroses,  
Springs of fresh primroses,

Springs to be, and springs for me  
Of distant dim primroses.

Oh to lie a-dream, a-dream,  
To feel I may dream and to know you deem  
My work is done for ever,  
And the palpitating fever  
That gains and loses, loses and gains,  
And beats the hurrying blood on the brunt of a thousand  
    pains  
Cooled at once by that blood-let  
Upon the parapet ;  
And all the tedious taskèd toil of the difficult long en-  
    deavour  
Solved and quit by no more fine  
Than these limbs of mine,  
Spanned and measured once for all  
By that right hand I lost,  
Bought up at so light a cost  
As one bloody fall  
On the soldier's bed,  
And three days on the ruined wall  
Among the thirstless dead.  
Oh to think my name is crost  
From duty's muster-roll ;  
That I may slumber tho' the clarion call,  
And live the joy of an embodied soul  
Free as a liberated ghost.

Oh to feel a life of deed  
Was emptied out to feed  
That fire of pain that burned so brief a while—  
That fire from which I come, as the dead come  
Forth from the irreparable tomb,  
Or as a martyr on his funeral pile  
Heaps up the burdens other men do bear  
'Thro' years of segregated care,  
And takes the total load  
Upon his shoulders broad,  
And steps from earth to God.

Oh to think, thro' good or ill,  
Whatever I am you'll love me still ;  
Oh to think, tho' dull I be,  
You that are so grand and free,  
You that are so bright and gay,  
Will pause to hear me when I will,  
As tho' my head were gray ;  
And tho' there's little I can say,  
Each will look kind with honour while he hears.  
And to your loving ears  
My thoughts will halt with honourable scars,  
And when my dark voice stumbles with the weight  
Of what it doth relate  
(Like that blind comrade—blinded in the wars—  
Who bore the one-eyed brother that was lame),  
You'll remember 'tis the same

That cried 'Follow me,'  
Upon a summer's day ;  
And I shall understand with unshed tears  
This great reverence that I see,  
And bless the day—and Thee,  
Lord God of victory !

And she,  
Perhaps oh even she  
May look as she looked when I knew her  
In those old days of childish sooth,  
Ere my boyhood dared to woo her.  
I will not seek nor sue her,  
For I'm neither fonder nor truer  
Than when she slighted my love-lorn youth,  
My giftless, graceless, guinealess truth,  
And I only lived to rue her.  
But I'll never love another,  
And, in spite of her lovers and lands,  
She shall love me yet, my brother !  
As a child that holds by his mother,  
While his mother speaks his praises,  
Holds with eager hands,  
And ruddy and silent stands  
In the ruddy and silent daisies,  
And hears her bless her boy,  
And lifts a wondering joy,

So I'll not seek nor sue her,  
But I'll leave my glory to woo her,  
And I'll stand like a child beside,  
And from behind the purple pride  
I'll lift my eyes unto her,  
And I shall not be denied.  
And you will love her, brother dear,  
And perhaps next year you'll bring me here  
All thro' the balmy April-tide,  
And she will trip like spring by my side,  
And be all the birds to my ear.  
And here all three we'll sit in the sun,  
And see the Aprils one by one,  
Primrosed Aprils on and on,  
Till the floating prospect closes  
In golden glimmers that rise and rise,  
And perhaps, are gleams of Paradise,  
And perhaps, too far for mortal eyes,  
New springs of fresh primroses,  
Springs of earth's primroses,  
Springs to be and springs for me,  
Of distant dim primroses.



*A NUPTIAL EVE.*

Oh, happy, happy maid,  
 In the year of war and death  
 She wears no sorrow !  
 By her face so young and fair,  
 By the happy wreath  
 That rules her happy hair,  
 She might be a bride to-morrow !  
 She sits and sings within her moonlit bower,  
 Her moonlit bower in rosy June,  
 Yet ah, her bridal breath,  
 Like fragrance from some sweet night-blowing flower,  
 Moves from her moving lips in many a mournful tune !  
 She sings no song of love's despair,  
 She sings no lover lowly laid,  
 No fond peculiar grief  
 Has ever touched or bud or leaf  
 Of her unblighted spring.  
 She sings because she needs must sing ;  
 She sings the sorrow of the air  
 Whereof her voice is made.  
 That night in Britain howsoe'er  
 On any chords the fingers strayed  
 They gave the notes of care.

A dim sad legend old  
Long since in some pale shade  
Of some far twilight told,  
She knows not when or where,  
She sings, with trembling hand on trembling lute-strings  
laid :—

The murmur of the mourning ghost  
That keeps the shadowy kine,  
' Oh, Keith of Ravelston,  
The sorrows of thy line !'

Ravelston, Ravelston,  
The merry path that leads  
Down the golden morning hill,  
And thro' the silver meads ;

Ravelston, Ravelston,  
The stile beneath the tree,  
The maid that kept her mother's kine,  
The song that sang she !

She sang her song, she kept her kine,  
She sat beneath the thorn  
When Andrew Keith of Ravelston  
Rode thro' the Monday morn,

His henchmen sing, his hawk-bells ring,  
His belted jewels shine !  
Oh, Keith of Ravelston,  
The sorrows of thy line !

Year after year, where Andrew came,  
Comes evening down the glade,  
And still there sits a moonshine ghost  
Where sat the sunshine maid.

Her misty hair is faint and fair,  
She keeps the shadowy kine ;  
Oh, Keith of Ravelston,  
The sorrows of thy line !

I lay my hand upon the stile,  
The stile is lone and cold,  
The burnie that goes babbling by  
Says nought that can be told.

Yet, stranger ! here, from year to year,  
She keeps her shadowy kine ;  
Oh, Keith of Ravelston,  
The sorrows of thy line !

Step out three steps, where Andrew stood—  
Why blanch thy cheeks for fear ?  
The ancient stile is not alone,  
Tis not the burn I hear !

She makes her immemorial moan,  
She keeps her shadowy kine ;  
Oh, Keith of Ravelston,  
The sorrows of thy line !

*THE MOTHER'S LESSON.*

COME hither an' sit on my knee, Willie,  
Come hither an' sit on my knee,  
An' list while I tell how your brave brither fell,  
Fechtin' for you an' for me :  
Fechtin' for you an' for me, Willie,  
Wi' his guid sword in his han'.  
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,  
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man !

Ye min' o' your ain brither dear, Willie,  
Ye min' o' your ain brither dear,  
How he pettled ye aye wi' his pliskies an' play,  
An' was aye sae cantie o' cheer :  
Aye sae cantie o' cheer, Willie,  
As he steppit sae tall an' sae gran',  
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,  
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man.

D'ye min' when the bull had ye doun, Willie,  
D'ye min' when the bull had ye doun ?

D'ye min' wha grippit ye fra the big bull,  
D'ye min' o' his muckle red woun' ?  
D'ye min' o' his muckle red woun', Willie,  
D'ye min' how the bluid doun ran ?  
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,  
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man.

D'ye min' when we a' wanted bread, Willie,  
The year when we a' wanted bread ?  
How he smiled when he saw the het parritch an' a',  
An' gaed cauld an' toom to his bed :  
Gaed awa' toom to his bed, Willie,  
For the love o' wee Willie an' Nan ?  
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,  
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man !

Next simmer was bright but an' ben, Willie,  
Next simmer was bright but an' ben,  
When there cam a gran' cry like a win' strang an' high  
By loch, an' mountain, an' glen :  
By loch, an' mountain, an' glen, Willie,  
The cry o' a far forrin lan',  
An' up loupit ilka brave man, Willie,  
Up loupit ilka brave man.

For the voice cam saying, 'Wha'll gang?' Willie,  
The voice cam saying, 'Wha'll gang  
To fecht owre the sea that the slave may be free,  
An' the weak be safe fra' the strang ?'

The weak be safe fra' the strang, Willie ;  
Rab looked on Willie an' Nan,  
An' hech, but he was a brave man, Willie,  
Hech, but he was a brave man !

I kent by his een he was gaun, Willie,  
I kent by his een he was gaun,  
An' he rose like a chief : twice we spak in our grief—  
' Dinna gang ! ' ' My mither, I maun ! '  
When he said, ' My mither, I maun,' Willie,  
I gied him his sword to his han'.  
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,  
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man !

An' sae it happened afar, Willie,  
Sae it happened afar,  
In the dead midnight there rose a great fecht,  
An' Rab was first i' the war :  
First i' the haur o' the war, Willie,  
Wi' his guid sword in his han' !  
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,  
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man !

An' there cam' a dark wicked lord, Willie,  
There cam' a dark wicked lord,  
An' oh my guid God ! on my bauld bairn he rode,  
An' smote him wi' his sword :

Smote him wi' his sword, Willie,  
But Rab had his guid sword in han' !  
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man, Willie,  
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man !

He rushed on the fae in his might, Willie,  
In his might to the fecht thro' the night,  
An' he grippit him grim, an' the fae grippit him,  
An' they rolled owre i' the fecht :  
They rolled owre i' the fecht, Willie,  
Rab wi' his guid sword in han' !  
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man, Willie,  
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man !

When the gran' stowre cleared awa', Willie,  
When the gran' stowre cleared awa',  
An' the mornin' drew near in chitter an' in fear,  
Still, still, in death they lay twa :  
Still, still, in death they lay twa, Willie,  
Rab wi' his guid sword in han' !  
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man, Willie,  
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man.

Then up fra the death-sod they bore him, Willie,  
The young men an' maidens they bore him,  
An' they mak the rocks ring 'gin my bairn were a king,  
An' a' the sweet lassies greet owre him :

A' the sweet lassies greet owre him, Willie,  
An' their proud lips kiss his cauld han',  
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,  
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man.

An' they big him a green grass grave, Willie,  
'They big him a green grass grave,  
My ain lad! my ain! an' they write on the stane,  
'Wha wad na sleep wi' the brave?'  
An' wha wad na sleep wi' the brave, Willie?  
Wha wad na dee for his lan'?  
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,  
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man!

Noo come to yon press wi' me, Willie,  
Come to yon press wi' me,  
And I'll show ye somethin' o' auld lang syne,  
When he was a bairnie like thee :  
When he was a bairnie like thee, Willie,  
And stood at my knee where ye stan',  
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,  
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man.

D'ye see this wee bit bannet, Willie,  
—I min' weel the day it was new—  
See how I haud it here to my heart,  
His wee bit bannet o' blue :



His wee bit bannet o' blue, Willie,  
Wi' its wee bit cockie an' ban'!  
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,  
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man.

D' ye see his ba' and his stickie, Willie,  
When he played at the ba';  
Na, na, ye're no to tak it in han',  
Ye're no sae brave an' sae braw!  
But gin ye grow braw an' brave, Willie,  
Aiblins I'se gie't to your han',  
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,  
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man.

An' this was his Guid Buik, Willie,  
The Guid Buik that he lo'ed,  
Where he read the Word o' the great guid Lord  
Wha bought us wi' His bluid.  
An' will we spare our bluid, Willie,  
To buy the dear auld lan'?  
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,  
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man.

They say he's dead an' gane, Willie,  
They say he's dead and gane.  
Wad God my bairnies a' were sons,  
That ten might gang for ane :

Ten might gang for ane, Willie,  
To save the dear auld lan' !  
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man, Willie,  
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man.

I'd no be lorn an' lane, Willie,  
I'd no be lorn an' lane,  
For gin I had him here by the han'  
He could na be mair my ain :  
He'd no be mair my ain, Willie,  
Gin I grippit him by the han' !  
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man, Willie,  
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man.

An' oh ! gin ye gang fra me, Willie,  
Gin ye gang as he gaed fra me,  
Ye 'll aye be still as near to my heart  
As the noo when ye sit on my knee :  
As the noo when ye sit on my knee, Willie,  
An' I haud ye by the han'.  
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man, Willie,  
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man.

' An' wad ye no greet at a', mither ?  
Wad ye no greet at a' ?'  
Aye, wad I greet my bonnie bonnie bairn !  
An' will ye no greet when I fa' ?'

Will I no greet when ye fa', Willie?  
God bless your bonnie wee han'!  
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,  
I kent weel ye'd be a brave man !

Aye, will I greet day an' night, Willie,  
Aye, will I greet day an' night !  
But gin ye can see fra your heaven down to me,  
Ye 'se no be wae at the sight :  
Ye 'se no be wae at the sight, Willie,  
E'en in your bright blessed lan' !  
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,  
I kent weel ye'd be a brave man.

Ye ken how I greet sae sair, Willie,  
Ye ken how I greet sae sair,  
When ye 're no my ain guid bairnie the day,  
An' my een are cloudy wi' care :  
My een are cloudy wi' care, Willie,  
An' I lean down my head on my han',  
An' think 'Will ye be a guid man, Willie,  
Ah, will ye grow a guid man ?'

Ye ken when I did na greet sae, Willie,  
Ye ken when I did na greet sae !  
Gran' gran' are a proud mither's tears,  
An' the gate that she gangs in her wae :

The gate that she gangs in her wae, Willie,  
Wi' her foot on her ain proud lan' !  
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man, Willie,  
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man.

Ye min' how ye saw me greet, Willie,  
Ye min' how ye saw me greet,  
When the great news cam' to the toun at e'en,  
An' we heard the shout in the street :  
We heard the shout in the street, Willie,  
An' the death-word it rode an' it ran.  
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man, Willie,  
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man.

Ye min' how I lift up mine ee', Willie,  
Ye min' how I lift up mine ee',  
An' smiled as I smile when I stan' i' the door,  
An see ye come toddlin' to me :  
See ye come toddlin' to me, Willie,  
An' smile afar off where I stan'.  
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man, Willie,  
Hech, but ye 'll be a brave man.

Thank God for ilk tear I let fa', Willie,  
Thank God for ilk tear I let fa',  
For oh, where they wipe awa' tears fra' a' een,  
Sic tears they wad no wipe awa' :

Sic tears they wad no wipe awa', Willie,  
Tho' there 's nane may be sad i' that lan'!  
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,  
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man.

Noo to your play ye maun gang, Willie,  
Noo to your play ye maun gang,  
An' belyve, my ain wee, ye'll come back to my knee,  
And I 'se sing ye an auld Scots sang :  
I 'se sing ye an auld Scots sang, Willie,  
A sang o' the dear auld lan'!  
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,  
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man.

An' aye d' ye min' what I say, Willie,  
What ye heard your auld mither say,  
Better to dee a brave man an' free,  
Than to live a fause coward for aye :  
Than to live a fause coward for aye, Willie,  
An' stan' by the shame o' your lan'!  
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,  
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man.

It's brave to be first at the schule,  
It's brave to be cock o' the class,  
It's brave to thwack a strang fule,  
It's brave to win a wee lass,

It's brave to be first wi' the pleugh,  
An' first i' the reel an' strathspey,  
An' first at the tod i' the cleugh,  
An' first at the stag at bay.

It's brave to be laird o' the glen,  
It's brave to be chief o' the clan,  
But he that can dree for his neebor to dee,  
Oh, he's the true brave man :  
He's the true brave man, Willie,  
An' the fame o' his name sall be gran' !  
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,  
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man.

*ALONE.*

THERE came to me softly a small wind from the sea,  
 And it lifted a curl as it passed by me.  
 But I sang sorrow and ho the heavy day !  
 And I sang heigho and well away !

Again there came softly a small wind from the sea,  
 And it lifted a curl as it passed by me.  
 And still I sang sorrow and ho the heavy day !  
 And I sang heigho and well-away !

Once more there came softly that small wind from the sea,  
 And it lifted a curl as it passed by me.  
 I hushed my song of sorrow and ho the heavy day,  
 And I hushed my heigho and well-away.

Then, when I was silent, that small wind from the sea,  
 It came the fourth time tenderly to me ;  
 To me, to me,  
 Sitting by the sea,  
 Sitting sad and solitary thinking of thee.  
 Like warm lips it touched me—that soft wind from the sea,  
 And I trembled and wept as it passed by me.

*FAREWELL.*

HEAR me, hear me, now !  
By this heaven less pure than thou,  
Fare thee well !  
By this living light  
Less bright,  
Fare thee well !

By the boundless sea  
Of mine agony,  
Fare thee well !  
That unfathomed sea  
Which must roll from me to thee,  
Must roll from thee to me,  
Fare thee well !

By the tears that I have bled for thee,  
Farewell !  
By the life's-blood I will shed for thee,  
Farewell !  
By that field of death and fear  
Where I'll fight with sword and spear  
The fight I'm fighting here,  
Fare thee well !



By a form amid the storm,  
Fare thee well !  
By a sigh above the cry,  
Fare thee well !

By the war-cloud and the shout  
That shall wrap me round about,  
But can never shut thee out,  
Fare thee well !

By the wild and bloody close,  
When I loose this hell of woes,  
And these fires shall eat our foes,  
Fare thee well !

By all thou'lt not forget,  
Fare thee well !  
By the joy when first we met,  
Fare thee well !

By the mighty love and pain  
Of the frantic arms that strain  
What they ne'er shall clasp again  
Fare thee well !

By the bliss of our first kiss,  
Fare thee well !

By the locked love of our last,  
Till a passion like a blast  
Tore the future from the past,  
Fare thee well !

By the nights that I shall weep for thee,  
Farewell !  
By the vigils I shall keep for thee,  
Farewell !  
By the memories that will beam of thee,  
Farewell !  
By the dreams that I shall dream of thee,  
Farewell !  
By the passion when I wake  
Of this heart that will not break,  
That can bleed but cannot break,  
Fare thee well !

By that holier woe of thine,  
Fare thee well !  
By thy love more pure than mine,  
Fare thee well !

By the days thou shalt hold dear for me,  
The lone life thou shalt bear for me,  
The grey hairs thou shalt wear for me,  
Farewell !

By thy good deeds offered up for me,  
Farewell !  
When thou fillest the wanderer's cup for me,  
Farewell !  
When thou givest the hungry bread for me,  
Farewell !  
When thou watchest by the dead for me,  
Farewell !

By the faith of thy pure eyes,  
By the hopes that shall arise  
Day and night to the deaf skies,  
Fare thee well !

By that faith I cannot share,  
Fare thee well !  
By this hopeless heart's despair,  
Fare thee well !

By the days I have been glad for thee,  
The years I shall be sad for thee,  
The hours I shall be mad for thee,  
Farewell !

*SLEEPING AND WAKING.*

I HAD a dream—I lay upon thy breast,  
In that sweet place where we lay long ago :  
I thought the morning woodbine to and fro  
With playful shadows whipped away my rest,  
And in my sleep I cried to thee, too blest,

‘ Rise, oh my love, the morning sun is bright,  
Let us arise, oh love, let us arise ;  
The flowers awake, the lark is in the skies,  
I will array myself in my delight,  
And we will—’ and I woke to death and night !

*HE LOVES AND HE RIDES AWAY.*

'T WAS in that island summer where  
They spin the morning gossamer,  
And weave the evening mist,  
That, underneath the hawthorn-tree,  
I loved my love, and my love loved me,  
And there we lay and kissed,  
And saw the happy ships upon the yielding sea.

Soft my heart, and warm his wooing,  
What we did seemed, while 'twas doing,  
Beautiful and wise ;  
Wiser, fairer, more in tune,  
Than all else in that sweet June,  
And sinless as the skies  
That warmed the willing earth thro' all the languid noon.

Ah that fatal spell !  
Ere the evening fell  
I fled away to hide my frightened face,

And cried that I was born,  
And sobbed with love and scorn,  
And in the darkness sought a darker place,  
And blushed, and wept, and blushed, and dared not think  
of morn.

Day and night, day and night,  
And I saw no light,  
Night and day, night and day,  
And in my woe I lay  
And dreamed the dreams they dream who cannot sleep :  
My speech was withered, and I could not pray ;  
My tears were frozen, and I could not weep.

I saw the hawthorn rise  
Between me and the skies,  
I felt the shadow was from pole to pole,  
I felt the leaves were shed,  
I felt the birds were dead,  
And on the earth I snowed the winter of my soul.

Like to the hare wide eyed,  
That with her throbbing side  
Pressed to the rock awaits the coming cry.  
In my despair I sate  
And waited for my fate ;  
And as the hunted hare returns to die,  
And with her latest breath  
Regains her native heath,

So, when I heard the feet of destiny  
Near and more near, and caught the yelp of death,  
Toward the sounding sea,  
Toward my hawthorn-tree,  
Under the ignorant stars I darkly crept :  
'There,' I said, 'they'll find me dead,  
Lying within my maidenhead.'  
And at my own unwonted voice, I wept ;  
And for my great heart-ache,  
Within a little brake  
I lay me weary down and weary slept,  
Nor ever oped mine eyes till morn had left the lake.

Her morning bath was o'er,  
And on the golden shore  
She stood like Flora with her floral train,  
And all her track was seen  
Among the watery sheen,  
That blushed, and wished, and blushing wished again,  
And parted still, and closed, with pleasure that had been.

Oh the happy isle,  
The universal smile  
That met, as love meets love, the smile of day,  
And touched and lit delight  
Within the common light,  
Till all the joy of life was ecstasy,  
And morn's wild maids ran each her flowery way,

And shook her dripping locks o'er hill, and dale, and lea !  
'At least,' I said, 'my tree is sear and blight,  
My tree, my hawthorn-tree !'

With downcast eyes of fear  
I drew me near and near,  
Dazed with the dewy glory of the hour,  
Till under-foot I see  
A flower too dear to me :  
I pause, and raise my full eyes from the flower,  
And lo ! my hawthorn-tree !

As a white-limbed may,  
In some illumined bay,  
Flings round her shining charms in starry rain,  
And with her body bright  
Dazzles the waters white,  
That fall from her fair form, and flee in vain,  
Dyed with the dear unutterable sight,  
And circle out her beauty thro' the circling main.

So my hawthorn-tree  
Stood and seemed to me  
The very face that smiled the summer smile :  
All lesser light-bearers  
Did light their lamps at hers—  
She lit her own at heaven's, and looked the while



A purer sweeter sun,  
Whence beauty was begun,  
And blossomed from her blossoms thro’ the blossoming  
isle.  
Then I took heart, and as I looked upon  
Her unstained white, I said, ‘I am not wholly vile.’

Thus my hawthorn-tree  
Was my witness unto me,  
And so I answered my impleading sin  
Till blossom-time was o’er,  
And with the autumn roar  
Mine unrebuked accuser entered in,  
And I fell down convinced, and strove with shame no  
more.

Some time after came to me,  
An image of the hawthorn-tree,  
And bore the old sweet witness ; and I heard,  
And from among the dead  
I lifted up my head,  
As one lifts up to hear a little bird,  
And finds the night is past and all the east is red.

Small and fair, choice and rare,  
Snowy pale with moonlight hair,  
My little one blossoms and springs !

Like joy with woe singing to it,  
Like love with sorrow to woo it,  
So my witty one so my pretty one sings !  
And I see the white hawthorn-tree and the bright summer  
bird singing thro' it,  
And my heart is prouder than kings !

While I look on her I seem  
Once again in the sweet dream  
Of that enchanted day,  
When, underneath the hawthorn-tree,  
I loved my love and my love loved me :  
And lost in love we lay,  
And saw the happy ships upon the yielding sea.

While I look on her I seem  
Once again in that bright dream,  
Beautiful and wise :  
Wiser, fairer, more in tune,  
Than all else in that sweet June,  
And sinless as the skies  
That warmed the willing earth thro' all the languid noon.

Like my hawthorn-tree,  
She stands and seems to me  
The very face that smiles the summer smile :  
All lesser light-bearers  
Do light their lamps at hers—  
She lights her own at heaven's, and looks the while

A sweeter purer sun,  
Whence beauty is begun,  
To blossom from that blossom thro' the blossoming isle.

Thou shalt not leave me, child !  
Come weather fierce or mild,  
My babe, my blossom ! thou shalt never leave me !  
Life shall never wean us,  
Nor death shall e'er have room to come between us,  
And time may grieve me but shall ne'er bereave me,  
Nor see us more apart than he hath seen us.

For I will fall with thee,  
As a bird from the tree  
Falls with a butterfly petal whitely shed,  
And falling—thou and I—  
I shall not dread to die,  
But like a child I'll take my flower to bed.  
And when the long cold death-night hath gone by,  
In the great darkness of the sepulchre  
I'll feel and find thee near,  
My babe, my white white blossom !  
And when the trumpet cries,  
I shall not fear to rise,  
But wear thee o'er the spot upon my bosom,  
And come out of my grave and bear the awful eyes.

*THE CAPTAIN'S WIFE.*

I do not say the day is long and weary,  
For while thou art content to be away,  
Living in thee, oh Love, I live thy day,  
And reck not if mine own be sad and dreary.

I do not count its sorrows or its charms :  
It lies as cold, as empty, and as dead,  
As lay my wedding-dress beside my bed  
When I was clothed in thy dear arms.

Yet there is something here within this breast  
Which, like a flower that never blossoms, lieth ;  
And tho' in words and tears my sorrow crieth,  
I know that it hath never been exprest.

Something that blindly yearneth to be known,  
And doth not burn, nor rage, nor leap, nor dart ;  
But struggles in the sickness of my heart,  
As a root struggles in a vault of stone.

Now, by my wedding-ring,  
I charge thee do not move

That heavy stone that on the vault doth lie ;  
I charge thee be of merry cheer, my love,  
Nor ever let me know that thou dost sigh,  
For, ah ! how light a thing  
Would shake me with the sorrow I deny !

I am as one who hid a giant's child  
In her deep prison, and, from year to year,  
He grew to his own stature, fierce and wild,  
And what she took for love she kept for fear.

Oh, thou enchanter, who dost hold the spells  
Of all my sealèd cells,  
Oh Love, that hast been silent all too long,  
A little longer, Love, oh, silent be ;  
My secret hath waxed strong,  
My giant hath grown up to angry age ;  
Do thou but say the word that sets him free,  
And, lo ! he tears me in his rage !

I do not say the day is sad and dreary,  
For while thou art content to be away,  
Living in thee, oh Love, I live thy day,  
And reck not if mine own be wan and weary.

I look down on it from my far love-dream,  
As some drowned saint may see with musing eyes  
Her lifeless body float adown the stream,  
While she is smiling in her skies.

But do thou silence keep !  
For I am one who walketh on the ledge  
Of some great rock's sheer edge:  
I walk in beauty and in light,  
Self-balanced on the height :  
A breath !—and I am breathless in the deep.

Oh, my own Love, I warn  
Thy grief to be as still as they who tread  
The snow of alpine peak,  
And see the pendulous avalanche o'erhead  
Hang like a dew-drop on a thorn !

I charge thee silence keep !  
My life stands breathless by her agony,  
Oh, do not bid her leap !  
I am as calm as air  
Before a summer storm ;  
The ocean of my thoughts hath ceased to roll ;  
This living heart that doth not beat is warm ;  
I think the stillness of my face is fair ;  
The cloud that fills my soul  
Is not a cloud of pain.  
Beware, beware ! one rash  
Sweet glance may be the flash  
That brings it raving down in thunder and in rain !

No, do not speak :  
Nor, oh ! let any tell of thy pale cheek,

Nor paint the silent sorrow of thine eye,  
Nor tell me thou art fond, or gay, or glad ;  
For, ah ' so tuned and lightly strung am I,  
That howsoe'er thou stir, I ring thereby.

Thy manly voice is deep,  
But if thou touch from sleep  
The woman's treble of my shrill reply,  
Ah, who shall say thine echoes may not weep ?  
A jester's ghost is sad,  
The shades of merriest flowers do mow and creep,  
And oh, the vocal shadows that should fly  
About the simplest word that thou canst say,  
What after spell shall ever lay ?

Hast thou forgot when I sat down to sing  
To my forsaken harp, long, long ago,  
How thou, for sport, wouldst strike a single string,  
And hark the hovering chorus come and go,  
Low and high, high and low,  
Till round the throbbing wire  
Rose such a quivering quire,  
As all King David's wives were echoing  
The tenor of their king.

Like those dear strings, my silent soul is full  
Of cries, as a ripe fruit is full of wine.  
The fruit is hanging fair and beautiful,  
And dry-eyed as a rose in the sunshine,

But try it with a single touch of thine,  
And, lo ! the drops that start,  
And all the golden vintage of its heart !

So, thinking of thy debt to Love and me,  
In some dull hour beyond the sea,  
Do thou but only say—  
As carelessly as men do pay their debts—  
‘ Oh, weary day ! ’  
And that one sigh o’ersets  
The hive of my regrets,  
‘ Ah, weary, weary day,  
Oh, weary, weary day,  
Oh, day so weary, oh, day so dreary,  
Oh, weary, weary, weary, weary, weary,  
Oh, weary, weary ! ’



*GRASS FROM THE BATTLE-FIELD.*

SMALL sheaf  
 Of withered grass, that hast not yet revealed  
 Thy story, lo ! I see thee once more green  
 And growing on the battle-field,  
 On that last day that ever thou didst grow !

I look down thro' thy blades and see between  
 A little lifted clover leaf  
 Stand like a cresset : and I know  
 If this were morn there should be seen  
 In its chalice such a gem  
 As decks no mortal diadem  
 Poised with a lapidary skill  
 Which merely living doth fulfil  
 And pass the exquisite strain of subtlest human will.  
 But in the sun it lifteth up  
 A dry unjewelled cup,  
 Therefore I see that day doth not begin ;  
 And yet I know its beaming lord  
 Hath not yet passed the hill of noon,

Or thy lush blades  
Would be more dry and thin,  
And every blade a thirsty sword  
Edged with the sharp desire that soon  
Should draw the silver blood of all the shades.  
I feel 't is summer. This whereon I stand  
Is not a hill, nor, as I think, a vale ;  
The soil is soft upon the generous land,  
Yet not as where the meeting streams take hand  
Under the mossy mantle of the dale.  
Such grass is for the meadow. If I try  
To lift my heavy eyelids, as in dreams  
A power is on them, and I know not why.  
Thou art but part ; the whole is unconfest :  
Beholding thee I long to know the rest.  
As one expands the bosom with a sigh,  
I stretch my sight's horizon ; but it seems,  
Ere it can widen round the mystery,  
To close in swift contraction, like the breast.  
The air is held, as by a charm,  
In an enforced silence, as like sound  
As the dead man the living. 'T is so still,  
I listen for it loud.  
And when I force my eyes from thy sole place  
And see a wider space,  
Above, around,  
In ragged glory like a torn  
And golden-natured cloud,

O'er the dim field a living smoke is warm ;  
As in a city on a sabbath morn  
The hot and summer sunshine goes abroad  
Swathed in the murky air,  
As if a god  
Enrobed himself in common flesh and blood,  
Our heavy flesh and blood,  
And here and there  
As unaware  
Thro' the dull lagging limbs of mortal make,  
That keep unequal time, the swifter essence brake.

But hark a bugle horn !  
And, ere it ceases, such a shock  
As if the plain were iron, and thereon  
An iron hammer, heavy as a hill,  
Swung by a monstrous force, in stroke came down  
And deafened Heaven. I feel a swoond  
Of every sense bestunned.  
The rent ground seems to rock,  
And all the definite vision, in such wise  
As a dead giant borne on a swift river,  
Seems sliding off for ever,  
When my reviving eyes,  
As one that holds a spirit by his eye  
With set inexorable stare,  
Fix thee : and so I catch, as by the hair,  
The form of that great dream that else had drifted by.

I know not what that form may be ;  
The lock I hold is all I see,  
And thou, small sheaf ! art all the battle-field to me.

The wounded silence hath not time to heal  
When see ! upon thy sod  
The round stroke of a charger's heel  
With echoing thunder shod !  
As the night-lightning shows  
A mole upon a momentary face,  
So, as that gnarled hoof strikes the indented place,  
I see it, and it goes !  
And I hear the squadrons trot thro' the heavy shell and  
shot,  
And wheugh ! but the grass is gory !  
Forward ho ! blow to blow, at the foe in they go,  
And 'tis hieover heigho for glory !

The rushing storm is past,  
But hark ! upon its track the far drums beat,  
And all the earth that at thy roots thou hast  
Stirs, shakes, shocks, sounds, with quick strong tramp of  
feet  
In time unlike the last.  
Footing to tap of drum  
The charging columns come ;  
And as they come their mighty martial sound  
Blows on before them as a flaming fire

Blows in the wind ; for, as old Mars in ire  
Strode o'er the world encompassed in a cloud,  
So the swift legion, o'er the quaking ground,  
Strode in a noise of battle. Nigh and nigher  
I heard it, like the long swell gathering loud  
What-time a land-wind blowing from the main  
Blows to the burst of fury and is o'er,  
As if an ocean on one fatal shore  
Fell in a moment whole, and threw its roar  
Whole to the further sea : and as the strain  
Of my strong sense cracked in the deafened ear,  
And all the rushing tumult of the plain  
Topped its great arch above me, a swift foot  
Was struck between thy blades to the struck root,  
And lifted : as into a sheath  
A sudden sword is thrust and drawn again  
Ere one can gasp a breath.  
I was so near,  
I saw the wrinkles of the leather grain,  
The very cobbler's stitches, and the wear  
By which I knew the wearer trod not straight ;  
An honest shoe it seemed that had been good  
To mete the miles of any country lane,  
Nor did one sign explain  
'T was made to wade thro' blood.  
My shoe, soft footstooled on this hearth, so far  
From strife, hath such a patch, and as he past  
His broken shoelace whipt his eager haste.

An honest shoe, good faith ! that might have stood  
Upon the threshold of a village inn  
And welcomed all the world : or by the byre  
And barn gone peaceful till the day closed in,  
And, scraped at eve upon some homely gate,  
Ah, Heaven ! might sit beside a cottage fire  
And touch the lazy log to softer flames than war.

Long, long, thou wert alone,  
I thought thy days were done,  
Flat as ignoble grass that lies out mown  
By peaceful hands in June, I saw thee lie.  
A worm crawled o'er thee, and the gossamer  
That telegraphs Queen Mab to Oberon,  
Lengthening his living message, passed thee by.  
But rain fell : and thy strawed blades one by one  
Began to stir and stir.

And as some moorland bird  
Whom the still hunter's stalking steps have stirred,  
When he stands mute, and nothing more is heard,  
With slow succession and reluctant art  
Grows upward from her bed,  
Each move a muffled start,  
And thro' the silent autumn covert red  
Uplifts a throbbing head  
That times the ambushed hunter's thudding heart ;

Or as a snow-drop bending low  
Beneath a flake of other snow  
Thaws to its height when spring winds melt the skies,  
And drip by drip doth mete a measured rise ;

Or as the eyelids of a child's fair eyes  
Lift from her lower lashes slow and pale  
To arch the wonder of a fairy tale ;  
So thro' the western light  
I saw thee slowly rearing to thy height.

Then when thou hadst regained thy state,  
And while a meadow-spider with three lines  
Enschemed thy three tall pillars green,  
And made the enchanted air between  
Mortal with shining signs,  
(For the loud carrion-flies were many and late),

Betwixt thy blades and stems  
There fell a hand,  
Soft, small and white, and ringed with gold and gems ;  
And on those stones of price  
I saw a proud device,  
And words I could not understand.

Idly, one by one,  
The knots of anguish came undone,  
The fingers stretched as from a cramp of woe,  
And sweet and slow

Moved to gracious shapes of rest,  
Like a curl of soft pale hair  
Drying in the sun.  
And then they spread,  
And sought a wonted greeting in the air,  
And strayed  
Between thy blades, and with each blade  
As with meeting fingers played  
And tresses long and fair.  
Then again at placid length it lay,  
Stretched as to kisses of accustomed lips ;  
And again in sudden strain  
Sprang, falling clenched with pain,  
Till the knuckles white,  
Thro' the evening gray,  
Whitened and whitened as the snowy tips  
Of far hills glimmer thro' the night.  
But who shall tell that agony  
That beat thee, beat thee into bloody clay  
Red as the sards and rubies of the rings ;  
As when a bird, fast by the fowler's net,  
A moment doth forget  
His fetters, and with desperate wings  
A sudden springs and falls,  
And (while from happy clouds the skylark calls)  
Still feebler springs  
And fainter falls,



And still untamed upon the gory ground  
With failing strength renews his deadly wound?  
At length the struggle ceased ; and my fixed eye  
Perceived that every finger wan  
Did quiver like the quivering fan  
Of a dying butterfly,  
Nor long I watched until  
Even the humming in the air was still.  
Then I gazed and gazed,  
Nor once my aching eyeballs raised  
Till a poor bird that had a meadow nest  
Came down, and like a shadow ran  
Among the shadowy grass.  
I followed with mine eyes ; and with a strain  
Pursued her, till six cubits' length beyond  
Thy central sheaf, I found  
A sight I could not pass.  
The hacked and haggard head  
Of a huge war-horse dead.  
The evening haze hung o'er him like a breath,  
And still in death  
He stretched drawn lips of rage that grinned in vain ;  
A sparrow chirped upon  
His wound, and in his dying slaver fed,  
Or picked those teeth of stone  
That bit with lifeless jaws the purple tongue of pain.  
  
But I remembered that dead hand

I left to trace the childless lark,  
And back o'er those six cubits of grass-land,  
Blade by blade, and stalk by stalk,  
As one doth walk  
Who, mindful, counts by dark  
Along the garden palings to the gate,  
I felt along the vision to where late  
There lay that dead hand white ;  
But now methought that there was something more  
Than when I looked before,  
And what was more was sweeter than the rest ;  
As when upon the moony half of night  
Aurora lays a living light,  
Softer than moonshine, yet more bright.  
And as I looked I was aware  
Another hand was on the hand,  
A smaller hand, more fair  
But not more white, as is the warm delight  
That curves and curls and coyly glows  
About the blushing heart of the white rose  
More fair but not more white  
Than those broad beauties that expand  
And fall, and falling blanch the morning air.

Both hands lay motionless,  
The living on the dead. But by and by  
The living hand began to move and press

The cold dead flesh, and took its silent way  
So often o'er the unrespective clay,  
In such long-drawn caress  
Of pleading passion, such an ecstasy  
Of supplicating touch, that as they lay  
So like, so unlike, twined with the fond art  
And all the dear delay  
And dreadful patience of a desperate heart,  
Methought that to the tenement  
From which it lately went,  
The naked life had come back, and did try  
By every gate to enter. While I thought,  
With sudden clutch of new intent  
The living grasp had caught  
The dead compliance. Slowly thro'  
The dusky air she raised it, and aloft,  
While all her fingers soft  
And every starting vein  
'Tightened as in a rack of pain,  
Held it one straining moment fixed and mute,  
And let it go.  
And with a thud upon the sod,  
It fell like falling fruit.

Then there came a cry,  
Tearless, bloodless, dry  
Of every sap of sorrow but its own—  
It had no likeness among living cries ;

And to my heart my streaming blood was blown  
As if before my eyes  
A dead man sprang up dead, and dead fell down.  
The carrion-hunting winds that prowl the wold,  
Frenzied for prey, sweep in and bear it on,  
Far, far and further thro' the shrieking cold,  
And still the yelling pack devour it as they run.  
And silence, like a want of air,  
Was round me, and my sense burned low,  
And darkness darkened ; and the glow  
Of the living hand being gone,  
The dead hand showed like a pale stone  
Full fathom five  
Under a quiet bay.  
But still my sight did dive  
To reach it where it lay,  
And still the night grew dark, and by degrees  
The dead thing glimmered with a drownèd light,  
As faces seem and sink in depths of darkening seas.  
Then, while yet  
My set eyes saw it, as the sage doth set  
His glass to some dim glimpse afar  
That palpitates from mote to star,  
It was touched and hid ;  
Touched and hid, as when a deep sea-weed  
Hides some white sea-sorrow. All  
My sight uprose, and all my soul  
(As one who presses at the pane

When a city show goes by),  
Crowded into the fixed eye,  
And filled the starting ball.  
Nor filled in vain.  
I began to feel  
The air had something to reveal.  
Beyond the blank indifference  
Was underlined another sense,  
Was rained a gracious influence ;  
And tho' the darkness was so deep,  
I knew it was not wholly dead,  
Nor empty, as we feel in sleep  
That some one standeth by the bed.  
I beheld, as who should look  
In trance upon a sealèd book.  
I perceived that in a place  
The night was lighter, as the face  
Of an Indian Queen when love  
Draws back the dark blood from her sick  
Pale cheek  
Behind the sable curtain that doth not move.

No outer light was shed,  
But as the mystery  
Before my stronger will did slowly yield,  
I saw, as in that dark hour before morn  
When the shocks of harvest corn  
Exhale about the midnight field

The wealth of yellow suns, and breathe a gentle day.  
I saw the shape of a fair bended head,  
And hair pale streaming long and low  
Veiling the face I might not know,  
And dabbling all the ground with sweet uncertain  
    woe.

Much I questioned in my mind  
Of her form and kind,  
But my stern compelling eye  
Brought no other answer from the air,  
Nor did my rude hand dare  
Profane that agony.  
I watched apart  
With such a sweet awe in my heart  
As looks up dumb into the sky  
When that goddess, lorn and lone,  
Who slew grim winter like a polar bear,  
And threw his immemorial white  
Upon her granite throne,  
Sits all unseen as Death,  
Save for the loss of many a hidden star  
And for the wintry mystery of her breath,  
And at a far-sight that she sees,  
Bowed by her great despair,  
Bendeth her awful head upon her knees,  
And all her wondrous hair  
Dishevels golden down the northern night.

At length my weary gaze  
Rents : and, haze in haze  
Pervolving as in glad release,  
I saw each separate shade  
Slide from his place and fade,  
And all the flowering dark did winter back  
Into its undistinguished black.  
So the sculptor doth in fancy make  
His formed image in the formless stone,  
And while his spells compel,  
Can see it there full well,  
The ivory kernel in the ivory shell,  
But shakes himself and all the god is gone.  
Alas !  
And have I seen thee but an hour ?  
And shalt thou never tell  
Thy story, oh thou broken flower,  
Thou midnight asphodel  
Among the battle grass ?

Too soon ! too soon !  
But while I bid thee stay,  
Night, like a cloud, dissolves into the day,  
And from the city clock I hear the stroke of noon.

*AFLOAT AND ASHORE.*

‘TUMBLE and rumble, and grumble and snort,  
Like a whale to starboard, a whale to port ;  
Tumble and rumble, and grumble and snort,  
And the steamer steams thro’ the sea, love !’

‘ I see the ship on the sea, love,  
I stand alone  
On this rock,  
The sea does not shock  
The stone ;  
The waters around it are swirled,  
But under my feet  
I feel it go down  
To where the hemispheres meet  
At the adamant heart of the world.  
Oh, that the rock would move !  
Oh, that the rock would roll  
To meet thee over the sea, love !  
Surely my mighty love  
Should fill it like a soul,



And it should bear me to thee, love ;  
Like a ship on the sea, love,  
Bear me, bear me, to thee, love !'

'Guns are thundering, seas are sundering, crowds are wondering,

Low on our lee, love.

Over and over the cannon-clouds cover brother and lover,  
but over and over

The whirl-wheels trundle the sea, love,  
And on thro' the loud pealing pomp of her cloud  
The great ship is going to thee, love ;  
Blind to her mark, like a world thro' the dark,  
Thundering, sundering, to the crowds wondering,  
Thundering ever to thee, love.'

'I have come down to thee coming to me, love,

I stand, I stand

On the solid sand,

I see thee coming to me, love ;

The sea runs up to me on the sand,

I start—'t is as if thou hadst stretched thine hand

And touched me thro' the sea, love.

I feel as if I must die

For there's something longs to fly,

Fly and fly, to thee, love.

As the blood of the flower ere she blows

Is beating up to the sun,

And her roots do hold her down,

And it blushes and breaks undone  
In a rose,  
So my blood is beating in me, love !  
I see thee nigh and nigher,  
And my soul leaps up like sudden fire,  
My life's in the air  
To meet thee there,  
To meet thee coming to me, love !  
Over the sea,  
Coming to me,  
Coming, and coming to me, love !'

'The boats are lowered : I leap in first,  
Pull, boys, pull ! or my heart will burst !  
More ! more !—lend me an oar !—  
I'm thro' the breakers ! I'm on the shore !  
I see thee waiting for me, love !'

'A sudden storm  
Of sighs and tears,  
A clenching arm,  
A look of years.  
In my bosom a thousand cries,  
A flash like light before my eyes,  
And I am lost in thee, love !'

*THE GHOST'S RETURN.*

SKIRLIN' an' birlin', tunin' an' croonin',  
 Reelin' an' skreelin', they piped down the glen,  
 Lang Hugh an' black Sandie, Ian Dhu an' wee Dandie,  
 Wha wad na gang wi' the braw Hielan'men ?

Skirlin' an' birlin', tunin' an' croonin',  
 Reelin' an' skreelin', they piped down the glen,  
 Wi' a rout an' a shout, an' a' the lasses out,  
 Wha wad na gang wi' the braw Hielan'men ?

Skirlin' an' birlin', tunin' an' croonin',  
 Reelin' an' skreelin', they piped down the glen !  
 Wi' the hot light o' noon an' the blue sky aboon,  
 Ilka man sword in han' gaed the braw Hielan'men !

Ken ye why we weep ? Think ye that they sleep,  
 Ilka man on his ain bluidy brae,  
 Ilk ane whar he died wi' a faeman by his side,  
 An' the pibroch can wauk him na mae ?

Or the news cam' fra the fiel' we ken'd it a' too weel,  
Our bonnie bonnie braw Hielan'men !  
Not a foot ony stirred to meet the bluidy word,  
As the death-roll cam' slow up the glen.

Had ye seen any sight of terror and affright?  
Did their ghosts walk in white up the glen?

We saw na ony sight o' terror an' affright,  
An' white's no for braw tartaned men !

Fra the hour they gaed that day, oh the glen was fu' o' wae,  
Our bonnie bonnie braw Hielan'men !  
Sair, sair, an' mair an' mair, our hearts were fu' o' care,  
And our een speerit aye down the glen ;

Till ae morn it did befa' that we waukit up a',  
An' the light it was sweet, but an' ben,  
An' a' that lang day we had na ony wae,  
An' no ee cared to speer down the glen.

Not a lassie but apart hid her wonder in her heart,  
An' lay close till the day began to dee,  
Lest her canty een confest the secret o' her breast,  
For she said, 'They will a' weep but me.'

But when we met at een by the thorn upon the green,  
An' the tale we a' tellt was the same,  
Not a word mair we said, but ilk ane hid her head,  
An' kenned that her man was at hame.

*DAFT JEAN.*

DAFT Jean,  
 The waesome wean,  
 She cam' by the cottage, she cam' by the ha',  
 The laird's ha' o' Wutherstanelaw,  
 The cottar's cot by the birken shaw ;  
 An' aye she gret,  
 To ilk ane she met,  
 For the trumpet had blawn an' her lad was awa'.

' Black, black,' sang she,  
 ' Black, black my weeds shall be,  
 My love has widowed me !  
 Black, black !' sang she.

Daft Jean,  
 The waesome wean,  
 She cam' by the cottage, she cam' by the ha',  
 The laird's ha' o' Wutherstanelaw,  
 The cottar's cot by the birken shaw ;  
 Nae mair she creepit,  
 Nae mair she weepit,

She stept 'mang the lasses the queen o' them a',  
The queen o' them a',  
The queen o' them a',  
She stept 'mang the lasses the queen o' them a'.  
For the fight it was fought i' the fiel' far awa',  
An' claymore in han' for his love an' his lan',  
The lad she lo'ed best he was foremost to fa'.

' White, white,' sang she,  
' White, white, my weeds shall be,  
I am no widow,' sang she,  
' White, white, my wedding shall be,  
White, white !' sang she.

Daft Jean,  
The waesome wean,  
She gaed na' to cottage, she gaed na' to ha',  
But forth she creepit,  
While a' the house weepit,  
Into the snaw i' the eerie night-fa'.

At morn we found her,  
The lammies stood round her,  
The snaw was her pillow, her sheet was the snaw ;  
Pale she was lying,  
Singing and dying,  
A' for the laddie wha fell far awa'.

' White, white,' sang she,  
' My love has married me,  
White, white, my weeds shall be,  
White, white, my wedding shall be,  
White, white,' sang she !

*THE RECRUITS' BALL.*

FIDDLER LOQUITUR.

HEIGHO, fiddlestick, fiddlestick, fiddlestick,  
Heigho, fiddlestick, fiddle for a king !  
Heigh, pretty Kitty ! heigh, jolly Polly !  
Up with the heels, girls ! fling, lasses, fling !  
Heigh there ! stay there ! that's not the way there !  
Oh Johnny, Johnny,  
Oh Johnny, Johnny,  
Ho, ho, everybody all round the ring !

Heigho, fiddlestick, fiddlestick, fiddlestick,  
Heigho, fiddlestick, fiddle for a king !  
Heigh, pretty Kitty ! heigh, jolly Polly !  
Up with the heels, girls ! swing, girls, swing !  
Foot, boys ! foot, boys ! to 't, boys ! do 't, boys !  
Ho, Bill ! ho, Jill ! ho, Will ! ho, Phil !  
Ho, Johnny, Johnny,  
Ho, Johnny, Johnny,  
Ho, ho, everybody, all round the ring !



Deuce take the fiddle,  
Deuce take the fiddle,  
Deuce take the jolly fiddle, deuce take the fiddler !  
Here goes the fiddle,  
Here goes the fiddle,  
Here goes the jolly fiddle, here goes the fiddler !

Ned, boy ! your head, boy !  
She 'll strike you dead, boy !  
There she goes at your nose !  
Deuce strike you dead, boy !

Call, boys ! bawl, boys !  
Deuce take us all, boys !  
Here we go, yes or no,  
Deuce take us all, boys !

Deuce take the wall, boys,  
Deuce take the floor, boys,  
Deuce take the jolly floor,  
Deuce take us all, boys !

There goes the wall, boys !  
There goes the door, boys !  
Round they swing in a ring !  
There goes the floor, boys !

Lad, wench, roof, floor,  
Wench, lad, wall, door !  
Curse the ground, spin it round !  
Deuce take us all, boys !

*FOR CHARITY'S SAKE.*

'Oh dark-eyed maid,'  
The soldier said,  
'I've been wounded in many a fray,  
But such a dart  
As you shoot to my heart  
I never felt till to-day.

'Then give to me  
Kisses, one, two, three,  
All for dear Charity's sake.  
And pity my pain,  
And meet me again,  
Or else my heart must break.'

Peggy was kind,  
She would save the blind  
Black fly that shimmered the ale,  
And her quick hand stopped  
If a grass-moth dropped  
In the drifted snows of the pail.

One, two, three,  
Kisses gave she,  
All for dear Charity's sake ;  
And she pitied his pain,  
And she met him again,  
For fear his heart should break.

The bugle blew,  
The merry flag flew,  
The squadron clattered the town ;  
The twigs were bright on the minster elm,  
He wore a primrose in his helm  
As they clattered thro' the town.  
Heydey, holiday, on we go !  
Heydey, holiday, blow boys, blow !  
Clattering thro' the town.

And when the minster leaves were sear,  
On a far red field by a dark sea drear,  
In dust and thunder, and cheer, boys, cheer,  
The bold dragoon went down.

Shiver, poor Peggy, the wind blows high ;  
Beg a penny as I go by,  
All for sweet Charity's sake :  
Hold the thin hand from the shawl,  
Turn the wan face to the wall,  
Turn the face, let the hot tears fall,  
For fear your heart should break.

*WIND.*

Oh the wold, the wold,  
Oh the wold, the wold !  
Oh the winter stark,  
Oh the level dark,  
On the wold, the wold, the wold !

Oh the wold, the wold,  
Oh the wold, the wold !  
Oh the mystery  
Of the blasted tree  
On the wold, the wold, the wold !

Oh the wold, the wold,  
Oh the wold, the wold !  
Oh the owl's croon  
To the haggard moon,  
To the waning moon,  
On the wold, the wold, the wold !

Oh the wold, the wold,  
Oh the wold, the wold !

Oh the fleshless stare,  
Oh the windy hair,  
On the wold, the wold, the wold !

Oh the wold, the wold,  
Oh the wold, the wold !  
Oh the cold sigh,  
Oh the hollow cry,  
The lean and hollow cry,  
On the wold, the wold, the wold!

Oh the wold, the wold,  
Oh the wold, the wold !  
Oh the white sight,  
Oh the shuddering night,  
The shivering shuddering night,  
On the wold, the wold, the wold !

*'WHEN THE RAIN IS ON THE ROOF.'*

LORD, I am poor, and know not how to speak,  
But since Thou art so great,  
Thou needest not that I should speak to Thee well.  
All angels speak unto Thee well.

Lord, Thou hast all things: what Thou wilt is Thine.  
More gold and silver than the sun and moon;  
All flocks and herds, all fish in every sea;  
Mountains and valleys, cities and all farms;  
Cots and all men, harvests and years of fruit.  
Is any king arrayed like Thee, who wearest  
A new robe every morning? Who is crowned  
As Thou, who settest heaven upon thy head?  
But as for me—  
For me, if he be dead, I have but Thee!  
Therefore, because Thou art my sole possession,  
I will not fear to speak to Thee who art mine,  
For who doth dread his own?

Lord, I am very sorrowful. I know  
That Thou delightest to do well; to wipe

Tears from all eyes ; to bind the broken-hearted ;  
To comfort them that mourn ; to give to them  
Beauty for ashes, and to garb with joy  
The naked soul of grief. And what so good  
But Thou that wilt canst do it? Which of all  
Thy works is less in wonder and in praise  
Than this poor heart's desire? Give me, oh Lord,  
My heart's desire ! Wilt Thou refuse my prayer  
Who givest when no man asketh ? How great things,  
How unbesought, how difficult, how strange,  
Thou dost in daily pleasure ! Who is like Thee,  
Oh Lord of Life and Death ? The year is dead ;  
It smouldered in its smoke to the white ash  
Of winter : but Thou breakest and the fire  
Is kindled, and Thy summer bounty burns.  
This is a marvel to me. Day is buried ;  
And where they laid him in the west I see  
The mounded mountains. Yet shall he come back ;  
Not like a ghost that rises from his grave.  
But in the east the palace gates will ope,  
And he comes forth out of the feast, and I  
Behold him and the glory after him,  
Like to a messaged angel with wide arms  
Of rapture, all the honour in his eyes,  
And blushing with the King. In the dark hours  
Thou hast been busy with him : for he went  
Down westward, and he cometh from the east,  
Not as toil-stained from travel, tho' his course

And journey in the secrets of the night  
Be far as earth and heaven. This is a sum  
Too hard for me, oh Lord ; I cannot do it.  
But Thou hast set it, and I know with Thee  
There is an answer. Man also, oh Lord,  
Is clear and whole before Thee. Well I know  
That the strong skein and tangle of our life  
Thou holdest by the end. The mother dieth—  
The mother dieth ere her time, and like  
A jewel in the cinders of a fire,  
The child endures. Also, the son is slain,  
And she who bore him shrieks not while the steel  
Doth hack her sometime vitals, and transfix  
The heart she throbbed with. How shall these things be ?  
Likewise, oh Lord, man that is born of woman,  
Who built him of her tenderness, and gave  
Her sighs to breathe him, and for all his bones—  
Poor trembler !—hath no wherewithal more stern  
Than bowels of her pity, cometh forth  
Like a young lion from his den. Ere yet  
His teeth be fangled he hath greed of blood,  
And gambols for the slaughter : and being grown,  
Sudden, with terrible mane and mouthing thunder,  
Like a thing native to the wilderness  
He stretches toward the desert ; while his dam,  
As a poor dog that nursed the king of beasts,  
Strains at her sordid chain, and, with set ear,  
Hath yet a little longer, in the roar



And backward echo of his windy flight,  
Him, seen no more. This also is too hard—  
Too hard for me, oh Lord ! I cannot judge it.  
Also the armies of him are as dust.  
A little while the storm and the great rain  
Beat him, and he abideth in his place,  
But the suns scorch on him, and all his sap  
And strength, whereby he held against the ground,  
Is spent ; as in the unwatched pot on the fire,  
When that which should have been the children's blood  
Scarce paints the hollow iron. Then Thou callest  
Thy wind. He passeth like the stowre and dust  
Of roads in summer. A brief while it casts  
A shadow, and beneath the passing cloud  
Things not to pass do follow to the hedge,  
Swift heaviness runs under with a show,  
And draws a train, and what was white is dark ;  
But at the hedge it falleth on the fields—  
It falleth on the greenness of the grass ;  
The grass between its verdure takes it in,  
And no man heedeth. Surely, oh Lord God,  
If he has gone down from me, if my child  
Nowhere in any lands that see the sun  
Maketh the sunshine pleasant, if the earth  
Hath smoothed o'er him as waters o'er a stone,  
Yet is he further from Thee than the day  
After its setting? Shalt Thou not, oh Lord,  
Be busy with him in the under dark,

And give him journey thro' the secret night,  
As far as earth and heaven? Aye, tho' Thou slay me  
Yet will I trust in Thee, and in his flesh  
Shall he see God! But, Lord, tho' I am sure  
That Thou canst raise the dead, oh what has he  
To do with death? Our days of pilgrimage  
Are three-score years and ten; why should he die?  
Lord, this is grievous, that the heathen rage,  
And because they imagined a vain thing,  
That Thou shouldst send the just man that feared Thee,  
To smite it from their hands. Lord, who are they,  
That this my suckling lamb is their burnt-offering?  
That with my staff, oh Lord, their fire is kindled,  
My ploughshare Thou dost beat into Thy sword,  
The blood Thou givest them to drink is mine?  
Let it be far from Thee to do to mine  
What if I did it to mine own, Thy curse  
Avengeth. Do I take the children's bread  
And give it to the dogs? Do I rebuke  
So widely that the aimless lash comes down  
On innocent and guilty? Do I lift  
The hand of goodness by the elbowed arm  
And break it on the evil? Not so. Not so.  
Lord what advantageth it to be God  
If Thou do less than I?

Have mercy on me!

Deal not with me according to mine anger!  
Thou knowest if I lift my voice against Thee,

'T is but as he who in his fierce despair  
 Dasheth his head against the dungeon-stone,  
 Sure that but one can suffer. Yet, oh Lord,  
 If Thou hast heard —if my loud passion reached  
 Thine awful ear —and yet, I think, oh Father,  
 I did not rage, but my most little anger  
 Borne in the strong arms of my mighty love  
 Seemed of the other's stature —oh, good Lord,  
 Bear witness now against me. Let me see  
 And taste that Thou art good. Thou who art slow  
 To wrath, oh pause upon my quick offence,  
 And show me mortal! Thou whose strength is made  
 Perfect in weakness, ah, be strong in me,  
 For I am weak indeed! How weak, oh Lord,  
 Thou knowest who hast seen the unlifted sin  
 Lie on the guilty tongue that strove in vain  
 To speak it. Call my madness from the tombs!  
 Let the dumb fiend confess Thee! If I sinned  
 In silence, if I looked the fool i' the face  
 And answered to his heart, 'There is no God,'  
 Now in mine hour stretch forth Thy hand, oh Lord,  
 And let me be ashamed. As when in sleep  
 I dream, and in the horror of my dream  
 Fall to the empty place below the world  
 Where no man is: no light, no life, no help,  
 No hope! And all the marrow in my bones  
 Leaps in me, and I rend the night with fear!  
 And he who lieth near me thro' the dark

Stretcheth an unseen hand, and all is well.  
Tho' Thou shouldst give me all my heart's desire,  
What is it in Thine eyes? Give me, oh God,  
My heart's desire! my heart's desire, oh God!  
As a young bird doth bend before its mother,  
Bendeth and crieth to its feeding mother,  
So bend I for that good thing before Thee.  
It trembleth on the rock with many cries,  
It bendeth with its breast upon the rock,  
And worships in the hunger of its heart.  
I tremble on the rock with many cries,  
I bend my beating breast against the rock,  
And worship in the hunger of my heart.  
Give me that good thing ere I die, my God!  
Give me that very good thing! Thou standest, Lord,  
By all things, as one standeth after harvest  
By the threshed corn, and, when the crowding fowl  
Beseech him, being a man and seeing as men,  
Hath pity on their cry, respecting not  
The great and little barley, but at will  
Dipping one hand into the golden store  
Straweth alike; nevertheless to them  
Whose eyes are near their meat and do esteem  
By conscience of their bellies, grain and grain  
Is stint or riches. Let it, oh my God,  
Be far from Thee to measure out Thy gifts  
Smaller and larger, or to say to me  
Who am so poor and lean with the long fast

Of such a dreary dearth—to me whose joy  
Is not as Thine—whose human heart is nearer  
To its own good than Thou who art in heaven—  
' Not this but this : ' to me who if I took  
All that these arms could compass, all pressed down  
And running over that this heart could hold,  
All that in dreams I covet when the soul  
Sees not the further bound of what it craves,  
Might filch my mortal infinite from Thine  
And leave Thee nothing less. Give me, oh Lord,  
My heart's desire ! It profiteth Thee nought  
Being withheld ; being given, where is that aught  
It doth not profit me ? Wilt Thou deny  
That which to Thee is nothing, but to me  
All things ? Not so. Not so. If I were God  
And Thou——Have mercy on me ! oh Lord ! Lord !

Lord, I am weeping. As Thou wilt, oh Lord,  
Do with him as Thou wilt ; but oh, my God,  
Let him come back to die ! Let not the fowls  
O' the air defile the body of my child,  
My own fair child that when he was a babe  
I lift up in my arms and gave to Thee !  
Let not his garment, Lord, be vilely parted,  
Nor the fine linen which these hands have spun  
Fall to the stranger's lot ! Shall the wild bird  
—That would have pilfered of the ox—this year  
Disdain the pens and stalls ? Shall her blind young,

That on the fleck and moult of brutish beasts  
Had been too happy, sleep in cloth of gold  
Whereof each thread is to this beating heart  
As a peculiar darling ? Lo, the flies  
Hum o'er him ! Lo, a feather from the crow  
Falls in his parted lips ! Lo, his dead eyes  
See not the raven ! Lo, the worm, the worm  
Creeps from his festering horse ! My God ! my God !

Oh Lord, Thou doest well. I am content.  
If Thou have need of him he shall not stay.  
But as one calleth to a servant, saying  
At such a time be with me, ' so, oh Lord,  
Call him to Thee ! Oh bid him not in haste  
Straight whence he standeth. Let him lay aside  
The soiled tools of labour. Let him wash  
His hands of blood. Let him array himself  
Meet for his Lord, pure from the sweat and fume  
Of corporal travail ! Lord, if he must die,  
Let him die here. Oh take him where Thou gavest !

And even as once I held him in my womb  
Till all things were fulfilled, and he came forth,  
So, oh Lord, let me hold him in my grave  
Till the time come, and Thou, who settest when  
The hinds shall calve, ordain a better birth ;  
And as I looked and saw my son, and wept  
For joy, I look again and see my son,  
And weep again for joy of him and Thee !

*THE BOTANIST'S VISION.*

THE sun that in Breadalbane's lake doth fall  
Was melting to the sea down golden Tay,  
When a cry came along the peopled way,  
'Sebastopol is ours !' From that wild call  
I turned, and leaning on a time-worn wall  
Quaint with the touch of many an ancient day,  
The mappèd mould and mildewed marquetry  
Knew with my focussed soul ; which bent down all  
Its sense, power, passion, to the sole regard  
Of each green minim, as it were but born  
To that one use. I strode home stern and hard ;  
In my hot hands I laid my throbbing head,  
And all the living world and all the dead  
Began a march which did not end at morn.

*THE ORPHAN'S SONG.*

I HAD a little bird,  
I took it from the nest ;  
I prest it, and blest it,  
And nurst it in my breast.

I set it on the ground,  
I danced round and round,  
And sang about it so cheerly,  
With ' Hey my little bird, and ho my little bird,  
And oh but I love thee dearly !'

I make a little feast  
Of food soft and sweet,  
I hold it in my breast,  
And coax it to eat ;

I pit, and I pat,  
I call it this and that,  
And sing about it so cheerly,  
With ' Hey my little bird, and ho my little bird,  
And ho but I love thee dearly !'



I may kiss, I may sing,  
But I can't make it feed,  
It taketh no heed  
Of any pleasant thing.

I scolded, and I socked,  
But it minded not a whit,  
Its little mouth was locked,  
And I could not open it.

'Tho' with pit, and with pat,  
And with this, and with that,  
I sang about it so cheerly,  
And 'Hey my little bird, and ho my little bird,  
And ho but I love thee dearly.'

But when the day was done,  
And the room was at rest,  
And I sat all alone  
With my birdie in my breast,

And the light had fled,  
And not a sound was heard,  
Then my little bird  
Lifted up its head,

And the little mouth  
Loosed its sullen pride,  
And it opened, it opened,  
With a yearning strong and wide.

Swifter than I speak  
I brought it food once more,  
But the poor little beak  
Was locked as before.

I sat down again,  
And not a creature stirred,  
I laid the little bird  
Again where it had lain ;

And again when nothing stirred,  
And not a word I said,  
Then my little bird  
Lifted up its head,  
And the little beak  
Loosed its stubborn pride,  
And it opened, it opened,  
With a yearning strong and wide.

It lay in my breast,  
It uttered no cry,  
'Twas famished, 'twas famished,  
And I couldn't tell why.

I couldn't tell why,  
But I saw that it would die,  
For all that I kept dancing round and round,  
And singing above it so cheerly,  
With ' Hey my little bird, and ho my little bird,  
And ho but I love thee dearly !'

I never look sad,  
I hear what people say,  
I laugh when they are gay  
And they think I am glad.

My tears never start,  
I never say a word,  
But I think that my heart  
Is like that little bird.

Every day I read,  
And I sing, and I play,  
But thro' the long day  
It taketh no heed.

It taketh no heed  
Of any pleasant thing,  
I know it doth not read,  
I know it doth not sing.

With my mouth I read,  
With my hands I play,  
My shut heart is shut,  
Coax it how you may.

You may coax it how you may  
While the day is broad and bright,  
But in the dead night  
When the guests are gone away,

And no more the music sweet  
Up the house doth pass,  
Nor the dancing feet  
Shake the nursery glass ;

And I've heard my aunt  
Along the corridor,  
And my uncle gaunt  
Lock his chamber door ;

And upon the stair  
All is hushed and still,  
And the last wheel  
Is silent in the square ;

And the nurses snore,  
And the dim sheets rise and fall,  
And the lamplight's on the wall,  
And the mouse is on the floor ;

And the curtains of my bed  
Are like a heavy cloud,  
And the clock ticks loud,  
And sounds are in my head ;

And little Lizzie sleeps  
Softly at my side,  
It opens, it opens,  
With a yearning strong and wide !

It yearns in my breast,  
It utters no cry,  
'Tis famished, 'tis famished,  
And I feel that I shall die,  
I feel that I shall die,  
And none will know why.  
Tho' the pleasant life is dancing round and round  
And singing about me so cheerly,  
With ' Hey my little bird, and ho my little bird,  
And ho but I love thee dearly ! '

*TOMMY'S DEAD.*

You may give over plough, boys,  
You may take the gear to the stead,  
All the sweat o' your brow, boys,  
Will never get beer and bread.  
The seed's waste, I know, boys,  
There's not a blade will grow, boys,  
'T is cropped out, I trow, boys,  
And Tommy's dead.

Send the colt to fair, boys,  
He's going blind, as I said,  
My old eyes can't bear, boys,  
To see him in the shed :  
The cow's dry and spare, boys,  
She's neither here nor there, boys,  
I doubt she's badly bred ;  
Stop the mill to-morn, boys,  
There'll be no more corn, boys,  
Neither white nor red ;  
There's no sign of grass, boys,

You may sell the goat and the ass, boys,  
The land's not what it was, boys,  
And the beasts must be fed :  
You may turn Peg away, boys,  
You may pay off old Ned,  
We 've had a dull day, boys,  
And Tommy's dead.

Move my chair on the floor, boys,  
Let me turn my head :  
She 's standing there in the door, boys,  
Your sister Winifred !  
Take her away from me, boys,  
Your sister Winifred !  
Move me round in my place, boys,  
Let me turn my head,  
Take her away from me, boys,  
As she lay on her death-bed,  
The bones of her thin face, boys,  
As she lay on her death-bed !  
I don't know how it be, boys,  
When all 's done and said,  
But I see her looking at me, boys,  
Wherever I turn my head ;  
Out of the big oak-tree, boys,  
Out of the garden-bed,  
And the lily as pale as she, boys,  
And the rose that used to be red.

There's something not right, boys,  
But I think it's not in my head,  
I've kept my precious sight, boys—  
The Lord be hallowed !  
Outside and in  
The ground is cold to my tread,  
The hills are wizen and thin,  
The sky is shrivelled and shred,  
The hedges down by the loan  
I can count them bone by bone,  
The leaves are open and spread,  
But I see the teeth of the land,  
And hands like a dead man's hand,  
And the eyes of a dead man's head.  
There's nothing but cinders and sand,  
The rat and the mouse have fed,  
And the summer's empty and cold ;  
Over valley and wold  
Wherever I turn my head  
There's a mildew and a mould,  
The sun's going out over head,  
And I'm very old,  
And Tommy's dead.

What am I staying for, boys,  
You're all born and bred,  
'T is fifty years and more, boys,  
Since wife and I were wed,



And she's gone before, boys,  
And Tommy's dead.

She was always sweet, boys,  
Upon his curly head,  
She knew she'd never see 't, boys,  
And she stole off to bed ; .  
I've been sitting up alone, boys,  
For he'd come home, he said,  
But it's time I was gone, boys,  
For Tommy's dead.

Put the shutters up, boys,  
Bring out the beer and bread,  
Make haste and sup, boys,  
For my eyes are heavy as lead ;  
There's something wrong i' the cup, boys,  
There's something ill wi' the bread,  
I don't care to sup, boys,  
And Tommy's dead.

I'm not right, I doubt, boys,  
I've such a sleepy head,  
I shall never more be stout, boys,  
You may carry me to bed.  
What are you about, boys,  
The prayers are all said,  
The fire's raked out, boys,  
And Tommy's dead.

The stairs are too steep, boys,  
You may carry me to the head,  
The night's dark and deep, boys,  
Your mother's long in bed,  
Tis time to go to sleep, boys,  
And Tommy's dead.

I'm not used to kiss, boys,  
You may shake my hand instead.  
All things go amiss, boys,  
You may lay me where she is, boys,  
And I'll rest my old head :  
'T is a poor world, this, boys,  
And Tommy's dead.

*‘SHE TOUCHES A SAD STRING OF SOFT  
RECALL.’*

RETURN, return ! all night my lamp is burning,  
     All night, like it, my wide eyes watch and burn ;  
 Like it, I fade and pale, when day returning  
     Bears witness that the absent can return,  
 Return, return.

Like it, I lessen with a lengthening sadness,  
     Like it, I burn to waste and waste to burn,  
 Like it, I spend the golden oil of gladness  
     To feed the sorrowy signal for return,  
 Return, return.

Like it, like it, whene’er the east wind sings,  
     I bend and shake ; like it, I quake and yearn,  
 When Hope’s late butterflies, with whispering wings,  
     Fly in out of the dark, to fall and burn—  
     Burn in the watchfire of return,  
 Return, return.

Like it, the very flame whereby I pine  
Consumes me to its nature. While I mourn  
My soul becomes a better soul than mine,  
And from its brightening beacon I discern  
My starry love go forth from me, and shine  
Across the seas a path for thy return,  
Return, return.

Return, return ! all night I see it burn,  
All night it prays like me, and lifts a twin  
Of palmèd praying hands that meet and yearn—  
Yearn to the impleaded skies for thy return.  
Day, like a golden fetter, locks them in,  
And wans the light that withers, tho' it burn  
As warmly still for thy return ;  
Still thro' the splendid load uplifts the thin  
Pale, paler, palest patience that can learn  
Nought but that votive sign for thy return—  
That single suppliant sign for thy return,  
Return, return.

Return, return ! lest haply, love, or e'er  
Thou touch the lamp the light have ceased to burn,  
And thou, who thro' the window didst discern  
The wonted flame, shalt reach the topmost stair  
To find no wide eyes watching there,  
No withered welcome waiting thy return !  
A passing ghost, a smoke-wreath in the air,

The flameless ashes, and the soulless urn,  
Warm with the famished fire that lived to burn—  
Burn out its lingering life for thy return,  
Its last of lingering life for thy return,  
Its last of lingering life to light thy late return,  
Return, return.

